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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 21 November 2011

Lundi 21 novembre 2011



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 21 November 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 21 novembre 2011

*The first day of the first session of the 40th Parliament of the province of Ontario commenced at 1400 pursuant to a proclamation of His Honour Warren K. Winkler, the Administrator of Ontario.*

*His Honour the Administrator entered the chamber and took his seat upon the throne.*

**Hon. Warren K. Winkler (Administrator):** Pray be seated.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I am commanded by His Honour the Administrator to state that he does not see fit to declare the causes of the summoning of the present Legislature of this province until a Speaker of this House shall have been chosen according to law, but tomorrow, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, His Honour will declare the causes of the calling of this Legislature.

*His Honour was then pleased to retire.*

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER ÉLECTION DU PRÉSIDENT

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my duty to call upon you to elect one of your number to preside over your deliberations as Speaker. Therefore, I ask for nominations for the office of Speaker.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I, Monte Kwinter, move, seconded by Christine Elliott, that Donna Cansfield, member for the electoral district of Etobicoke Centre, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Does the honourable member from Etobicoke Centre accept the nomination?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I accept.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Are there any further nominations?

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** Merci, madame Deller. Je, Shafiq Qaadri, député d'Etobicoke-Nord, propose, appuyé par Tracy MacCharles, députée de Pickering-Scarborough East, que David Zimmer, député de la circonscription de Willowdale, prenne le fauteuil en tant que Président de l'Assemblée législative.

I, Shafiq Qaadri, MPP of Etobicoke North, move, seconded by my honourable colleague Tracy MacCharles, MPP for Pickering-Scarborough East, that David Zimmer, member for the electoral district of Willowdale, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Does the honourable member from Willowdale accept the nomination?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I do.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Are there any further nominations?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I, Liz Sandals, the member for the riding of Guelph, move, seconded by Jerry Ouellette, the member for the riding of Oshawa, that Dave Levac, member for the electoral district of Brant, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Does the honourable member from Brant accept the nomination?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I accept the nomination with thanks.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Are there any further nominations?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. I, Lorenzo Berardinetti, move, seconded by Mr. Kim Craitor, that Mr. Kevin Flynn, member for the electoral district of Oakville, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Does the honourable member from Oakville accept the nomination?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I do.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed.

Nominations having been closed, the balloting shall begin. Shortly, there will be a nomination list posted on the four ballot boxes, which will be laid upon the clerks' table. The members, in order to receive their ballots, will go down towards the door, around and behind the benches, and will pick up their ballots from the clerks, who are attending the tables behind the throne. There will be clerks here to assist you in making your way to the ballot boxes to cast your ballot.

May I have the ballots, please?

1418

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Have all members who wish to vote done so? Have all members wishing to vote done so? The ballot is now closed and I will ask the Sergeant to deliver the ballot box to the side office.

Ballots will be counted by the Clerk's assistant. When there is an announcement to be made, the bells will ring for five minutes to call members back into the chamber.

If the scrutineers would now join the Clerk's assistant for the counting.

1430

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Please ring the bells for five minutes.



1435

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Honourable members, we have need of a second ballot. The candidates will be, in alphabetical order, the member for Etobicoke Centre, the member for Brant and the member for Willowdale.

Please prepare the ballot boxes.

1447

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Order. Have all members who wish to vote done so?

That being the case, this ballot is now closed. Sergeant, please deliver the ballot box.

1502

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** Order. Honourable members, I declare the member for Brant elected as Speaker.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Well, first of all—

**Interjection:** Pray be seated.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pray be seated.

I'm very moved. This is a glorious place. And as I've said in the past, of the 13 million people to choose from, we're here. It's an honour and a privilege, and I can't thank you enough for providing me with that opportunity.

To Liz and Jerry: Thank you. I deeply appreciate your faith. To those who supported my colleagues: I thank you. I also thank my colleagues, the three members. I did say this: If any of the four of us were to take this chair, we would be well served.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I accept the challenge humbly. I'm very proud to say that we are the elected members of Ontario, and I'll do my best to work with all of you to keep the dignity, the honour and the trust of this place in your hands. It's your House; it's our House; and together, we'll make it the best House in the province and the best province in the country of Canada.

Last but not least, I will advise this: I have been telling people in my own riding and wherever I have had an opportunity to say it—and by the way, this is as long as I will speak; I won't ever speak this long—about the idea that there are other parts of the world that can't even have an assembly like this, and they give up their lives to find our democracy. We are truly blessed.

I thank each and every one of you.

*Applause.*

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn until 2 p.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, November 22, 2011.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The House leader has moved adjournment of the House. All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

**Interjection:** You never want to work over there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, here we go.

This House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1508.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York-Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth-Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron-Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe-Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Monday 21 November 2011 / Lundi 21 novembre 2011**

### **Election of Speaker / Élection du Président**

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller).....	1
Mr. Monte Kwinter.....	1
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	1
M. Shafiq Qaadri .....	1
Mr. David Zimmer.....	1
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	1
Mr. Dave Levac .....	1
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	1
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	1
The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller).....	2
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	2



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 22 November 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 22 novembre 2011

*The House met at 1400.*

*His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the chamber and took his seat upon the throne.*

**Hon. David C. Onley (Lieutenant Governor):** Pray be seated.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfill the important duties thus assigned to me.

If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not to the assembly, whose servant I am and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their Queen and country, hereby claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they have freedom of speech in their debates, access to your person at all reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from you the most favourable consideration.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the assembly to Her Majesty's person and government and, not doubting that the proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temperance and prudence, he grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow the constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the assembly shall have ready access to His Honour upon all suitable occasions, and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.

*His Honour the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to open the session by reading the speech from the throne.*

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

**Hon. David C. Onley (Lieutenant Governor):** Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great privilege to welcome you all to the first session of the 40th Parliament of Ontario.

Before proceeding, it is my honour to extend warm congratulations and my very best personal wishes to all parliamentarians especially on behalf of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada.

And while I have this opportunity, let me say as well how much I look forward to two important milestones in 2012: that is, the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty's

accession to the throne and the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

I urge all Ontarians to celebrate and reflect on these important milestones in the year ahead.

Mr. Speaker, this is a historic place.

It is an important symbol of our democracy.

But it is more than that.

It is a living, breathing institution—one that continues to grow, and to evolve.

It continues to welcome new members and new ideas.

It continues to speak to the needs of successive generations of Ontario families.

Durant les deux Guerres mondiales, la Grande Dépression, les crises constitutionnelles et les récessions, pour les gouvernements de l'Ontario, le discours du trône a toujours été l'occasion de se pencher sur les défis et les possibilités qui se présentaient à eux, d'établir leurs priorités et d'inviter les Ontariennes et Ontariens à s'unir pour renforcer notre province.

Je trouve cela très inspirant.

C'est donc avec un immense plaisir que je souhaite la bienvenue à nos députés.

Against the backdrop of world wars, the Great Depression, constitutional crises and recessions, the speech from the throne has always been a moment for Ontario governments to reflect on their challenges and opportunities, set out their priorities, and call Ontarians together to strengthen our province.

I find that very inspiring.

So it is with great pleasure that I welcome our new members.

Especially, our newest members.

Ours is a time of global change, upheaval and uncertainty.

Many fear that the world's largest trading bloc—the European Union—is on the verge of recession as it struggles to deal with its ongoing debt crisis.

For the world's largest economy and our biggest trading partner, the United States, overcoming their economic challenges will also take many years and great effort.

We don't fully know what the global economic uncertainty means for Ontario, and for our families, yet.

But we do know that we will continue to see challenges to our economy from outside Ontario.

And here at home, we still have too many people looking for work.

Autrement dit, le monde vient d'entamer une période de croissance plus lente.



Et nous nous attendons à ce que ce rythme de croissance ralentie se poursuive tout au long du mandat de quatre ans que cette Assemblée législative a reçu.

Toutefois, voici l'un des paradoxes de notre époque : alors que l'économie mondiale stagne, les innovations continuent de plus belle, à un rythme effréné et sans précédent.

Simply put, our world has entered into a time of slower growth.

And we expect that slower pace of growth to continue through the four-year mandate given to this Parliament.

One of the paradoxes of this time, however, is this: while the global economy lags, innovation continues to surge ahead at a staggering and unprecedented rate.

In areas such as communications, automotive technology and clean energy, changes are coming quickly, and profoundly reshaping the way we live.

For example, 77% of people over 65 have embraced the information age and are now on the Web.

In the first quarter of this year, sales of hybrid and electric vehicles grew twice as fast as conventional car sales.

And, last year, more money was invested in renewable technologies worldwide than in fossil fuels.

So, while the challenges facing Ontario in the global economy are considerable, there are also opportunities to be seized.

And it's necessary to seize those opportunities, not to strengthen our economy for its own sake, or to improve the lives of a select few, but so that all our families have opportunities of their own.

C'est pourquoi, au cours des quatre prochaines années, votre gouvernement concentrera ses efforts sur le renforcement de l'économie ontarienne et la création d'emplois.

En même temps, il continuera de protéger les gains que les Ontariennes et Ontariens ont réalisés ensemble, sachant que des hôpitaux et des écoles de grande qualité et des services publics fiables sont les assises d'une solide économie et d'une bonne qualité de vie.

**1410**

That's why—for the next four years—your government will focus its efforts on strengthening Ontario's economy and creating jobs.

At the same time, it will continue to protect the gains Ontarians have made, together, recognizing that quality hospitals, good schools and strong public services are the foundation of a strong economy and a great quality of life.

To that end, your government will implement the plan it campaigned on—and Ontarians elected it to carry out—as a strong, steady government.

Your government will do so in the context of our new, global economic reality—recognizing that priority must be given to those parts of the plan that best address the immediate needs of Ontario families as it works to steadily improve Ontario's economy.

It will do so knowing that tax reforms undertaken by your government have been touted by Forbes magazine

and the World Bank as key factors that have positioned our economy to grow—and add new jobs.

And it will do so working with all members of this House—recognizing that at a time of global economic uncertainty, Ontario families need their leaders to work together.

Your government sees this Parliament as a tremendous opportunity for all members to strengthen our province, together.

To do that, your government will move forward with its economic plan.

First, your government will continue to build a stronger, more competitive workforce.

That starts with our youngest learners.

Your government is committed to ensuring that 250,000 Ontario four- and five-year-olds will be enrolled in North America's first full-day kindergarten program by 2014.

And it will continue to raise test scores and graduation rates.

Nous savons aussi que 70 % des nouveaux emplois dans l'économie mondiale nécessiteront une formation et des études postsecondaires.

Votre gouvernement a donc décidé de créer 60 000 nouvelles places dans les collèges et universités de la province, afin de permettre à tous les élèves qui en ont les compétences et qui le souhaitent de faire des études supérieures.

Afin que les frais de scolarité des collèges et des universités restent abordables pour tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes, votre gouvernement les réduira de 30 % en moyenne pour les familles qui gagnent moins de 160 000 \$ par an.

Les étudiantes et étudiants recevront ce soutien pour le semestre qui débutera le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2012.

We know that 70% of all new jobs in the global economy will require post-secondary education and training.

So your government is creating 60,000 new spaces in our colleges and universities to ensure that every qualified Ontario student who wants to go to college or university can do so.

To keep tuition affordable and within the reach of all Ontarians, your government will reduce the average college and university tuition by 30% for families earning less than \$160,000 per year.

Students will receive this support for the semester beginning January 1, 2012.

To ensure more students in more communities across Ontario have access to quality learning, closer to home, your government will move forward with the selection of three sites for new undergraduate campuses.

And to help those who lose their jobs find new jobs, your government will ensure that its successful Second Career program has the resources it needs.

Your government will continue to work hard to close the socio-economic gap between aboriginal people and non-aboriginal Ontarians.

And it will continue to call on the federal government to work with First Nations, other aboriginal partners and the province to improve education supports for aboriginal students.

Second, your government will continue to make investments in infrastructure.

Building modern, efficient infrastructure creates jobs and makes our economy more productive and improves our quality of life.

That's why, together with hard-working Ontarians, your government is building hospitals and schools.

It is why, together, we are building new roads and public transit as well as a modern electricity system with new transmission lines and electricity generation.

Your government has already committed to new transit in Toronto, Ottawa and Kitchener-Waterloo, a new subway to York University and Vaughan, and a rail link between Pearson Airport and Union Station.

The next step in that transit plan will be the introduction of two-way, all-day GO train service—which will help keep Ontarians living in the GTA and greater Golden Horseshoe moving while creating 68,000 new jobs.

Third, your government will continue to aggressively pursue new investment in the Ontario economy.

Votre gouvernement maintient son engagement à l'égard des énergies propres, l'un des secteurs économiques qui s'accroissent le plus rapidement au monde, et des 50 000 nouveaux emplois de qualité envisagés pour ce secteur. C'est grâce à sa Loi sur l'énergie verte que de tels emplois se créent actuellement un peu partout dans les localités de l'Ontario.

Il existe aussi d'autres possibilités de croissance.

Dans le nord de l'Ontario, le secteur minier connaît un essor historique et exaltant. Votre gouvernement demeure résolu à transformer le vaste potentiel inexploité du Cercle de feu en des emplois de qualité à la fine pointe de la technologie dans cette région de la province.

Your government remains fully committed to clean energy and the 50,000 new, good jobs in one of the world's fastest-growing economic sectors. These jobs are being created by its Green Energy Act in communities across Ontario.

There are other opportunities for growth as well.

In Ontario's north, the mining sector is experiencing a historic and exciting boom. Your government remains fully committed to turning the vast, untapped potential of the Ring of Fire into good, leading-edge northern jobs.

And your government will continue to strengthen trade ties in growing international markets like India and China.

Because, in a global economy, international trade is essential to creating jobs at home.

Fourth, your government will continue to focus on improving quality of life for our families.

That means making things a bit easier when it comes to expenses and improving services—like health care—that families rely on.

In the case of our seniors, those two imperatives go hand-in-hand.

Your government will introduce a healthy homes renovation tax credit worth up to \$1,500 annually.

This would make it more affordable for our seniors to make home improvements like adding a ramp, walk-in tub or stair lift.

In combination with this new tax credit, your government will move to increase home care services for seniors.

These two initiatives would improve seniors' quality of life by allowing them to stay in their own homes longer and provide a real, tangible benefit to taxpayers by saving long-term-care costs.

The new tax credit would also create jobs in the home renovation sector as workers begin taking on these projects.

These are the kinds of solutions your government will undertake as it seeks to both provide excellent health care for families and control costs for taxpayers.

C'est aussi la raison pour laquelle votre gouvernement exhortera le gouvernement fédéral à conclure une nouvelle entente de 10 ans sur les soins de santé, comprenant des priorités, des responsabilités et des objectifs clairs, ainsi qu'une réforme du système de santé pour répondre aux besoins des personnes âgées de plus en plus nombreuses.

That's also why your government will press for a new, 10-year health accord with the federal government, with priorities, accountability and clear goals, including health care reforms designed to meet the needs of our growing population of seniors.

Your government will also undertake specific measures to help more Ontario families manage their home expenses.

As part of a package of reforms that includes a reduction in tuition for middle- and lower-income families, a home renovation tax credit and scheduled tax cuts for families and businesses, your government will also continue to take 10% off the total cost of electricity on bills through the Clean Energy Benefit.

And your government remains committed to uploading services from municipalities to give municipal taxpayers a much-needed break.

1420

Your government also knows that Ontario's wealth is not just economic. It is found in our abundance of natural beauty and resources, and we all have a duty to protect it.

That is why your government will follow through on its goal to become the continent's water innovation leader by 2015 and work with environmental experts and community groups to develop and introduce a Great Lakes protection act.

These and other measures enhance the affordability and quality of life in Ontario. This, in turn, attracts the world's top talent and new investment in jobs and growth.

Fifth, your government will move forward with a prudent, balanced-budget plan.



Votre gouvernement reste déterminé à rééquilibrer le budget de la province d'ici 2017-2018.

Et il est en bonne voie de réduire la fonction publique de l'Ontario de 5 % d'ici mars 2012.

Your government remains committed to returning the province's budget back to balance by 2017-18.

Your government is on track to reduce the Ontario public service by 5% by March 2012.

Reducing the size of the Ontario Public Service by an additional 2% by 2014 will save a total of \$500 million.

Your government will also find \$200 million in savings at major agencies by 2014.

Your government recognizes that additional, unforeseen expenditures may arise as we move forward.

However, any new spending that is not part of your government's current plan will need to come from savings realized elsewhere.

These and other details will be further described in the government's fall economic statement to be released tomorrow.

In addition, your government will receive a report from Don Drummond in the next few months.

That report will make recommendations on ways to eliminate the deficit and ensure that Ontario has the fiscal capacity to support strong schools and hospitals, even as worldwide economic growth slows.

Your government looks forward to that report and discussing its findings in this Legislature. It is hoped that Mr. Drummond's report will spur a mature, thoughtful debate that contributes toward your government's overall objectives.

Mr. Drummond will challenge all those elected to this Legislature to bring forward their best ideas to help your government balance the budget, control spending growth and deliver for Ontario families.

This challenge creates new opportunities for all Ontarians to contribute their ideas to help transform the way your government works. Your government can and will find ways to deliver its services more efficiently and effectively.

With health care consuming an ever-increasing portion of the budget and with the growing pressure created by our aging population, many Ontarians fear for the future of health care.

Your government commits itself wholeheartedly to the exciting task of renewing and reforming health care for the benefit of our generation and future generations of Ontarians.

Pendant que votre gouvernement s'emploiera à moderniser le système de santé, à renforcer la main-d'œuvre de la province, à bâtir l'infrastructure, à consolider les liens commerciaux, à améliorer la qualité de vie des familles ontariennes et à rééquilibrer le budget provincial, nous en appellerons à tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative pour qu'ils coopèrent à la réalisation de ce plan.

Si de bonnes idées lui sont présentées, votre gouvernement les adoptera.

Si les députés sont prêts à coopérer pour renforcer notre économie et créer des emplois, votre gouvernement sera ravi de travailler avec eux.

As your government moves forward to renew health care, strengthen Ontario's workforce, build infrastructure, strengthen trade ties, improve Ontario families' quality of life and return our provincial budget to balance, all members of this House will be called upon to work together to achieve that plan.

Where there are good ideas, your government will adopt them.

Where members are willing to work together to strengthen our economy and create jobs, your government will welcome the opportunity to work with them.

Your government rejects the politics of division and rancour and will oppose measures that do not serve to move Ontarians forward, together.

Because your government believes that what matters in these times are not the opinions that divide the members of this House but the greater goal shared by all its members: building a stronger Ontario.

Building a stronger province requires us to abide by the values that have made Ontario great, and protecting the gains we have made, together.

So in meeting the challenges before us, your government will be guided by key principles.

It will protect health care and education as the most important public services. Reforms will not compromise quality.

It will also reject across-the-board reductions because these would mean deep cuts to health care and education.

Any reforms adopted must lead to better value for money through improved efficiencies and greater productivity.

The government will not consider tax increases or privatize public health care.

And finally, your government will not pursue austerity measures that harm our economy.

As we seek opportunities for the future, we are reassured by history.

For it teaches us that, through the ages, societies have faced challenges similar to ours and, with ingenuity, resilience and compassion, prevailed.

As Abraham Lincoln once said:

"The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew."

These are serious times.

And they demand that all members of this House devote themselves to a serious plan, and a common goal.

Ontario requires a strong, steady government focused on good jobs and a stronger economy for all our families—including our most vulnerable.

Ontario families are looking to this House to deliver, today, as it has done in the past.

They need to know that their government is there for them.

They need to know we are going to tackle our challenges, and seize opportunities by working together—the Ontario way—just as Ontarians themselves have done throughout our history.

When the recession hit, your government did not waver in its strong support for the schools and health care Ontario families count on.

It worked to retrain those who had lost their jobs.

It partnered with industry and the federal government to save the auto sector, protecting jobs and businesses.

Et il a saisi de nouveaux débouchés prometteurs dans le secteur de l'énergie propre, créant des dizaines de milliers d'emplois pour les familles ontariennes.

Alors que l'économie mondiale se débat au lendemain d'une terrible récession, alors que l'Ontario subit le contrecoup de cette crise mondiale, les priorités de ce gouvernement sont, et continueront d'être, les priorités des Ontariennes et des Ontariens :

Une excellente qualité de vie pour nos familles.

La sécurité et la tranquillité d'esprit associées à un bon emploi.

Un brillant avenir pour tous nos enfants.

And it seized exciting new opportunities in clean energy, creating tens of thousands of new jobs for Ontario families.

As the world economy struggles in the aftermath of a terrible recession—as Ontario experiences these global aftershocks—the priorities of this government are, and will remain, the priorities of Ontarians:

A great quality of life for our families.

The security and confidence that come with a good job.

And a bright future for all our children.

Inspired by Ontarians, your government will continue to rise to the challenges before us.

When Ontario was confronted with deteriorating public services, your government acted.

Now, Ontario has one of the best public education systems in the world and the shortest wait times for key surgical procedures in the country.

When the global economy was ravaged by a recession, your government acted.

Now, Ontario has a new tax system that makes us a magnet for foreign investment and job creation.

Confronted with today's challenge of providing world-class public services and a balanced budget in a time of slow growth, your government will act, once again.

1430

Now, more than ever, in these times of uncertainty, the people of Ontario call upon the members of this Legislature to give them their best by working hard and working together.

They call upon you to lead with vision and hope.

And your government will not let the people of Ontario down.

Thank you.

*Singing of O Canada.*

*His Honour was then pleased to retire.*

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of the speech from the throne, which I will now read.

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Agreed? I shall dispense.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### AN ACT TO PERPETUATE AN ANCIENT PARLIAMENTARY RIGHT LOI VISANT À PERPÉTUER UN ANCIEN DROIT PARLEMENTAIRE

Mr. McGuinty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 1, An Act to perpetuate an ancient parliamentary right / Projet de loi 1, Loi visant à perpétuer un ancien droit parlementaire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Following long-standing tradition, the first bill introduced in the Legislature involves an initiative not mentioned in the speech from the throne. I am pleased to introduce this bill here today. This practice signifies the assembly's independence from the crown and the collective right of members to address the Legislature's priorities before attending to other business.

## MOTIONS

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

**Hon. John Milloy:** I move that the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to this House be taken into consideration on Wednesday, November 23, 2011.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Hon. John Milloy:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Agreed? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. on Wednesday, November 23, 2011.

*The House adjourned at 1438.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.  
 Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac  
 Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller  
 Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum  
 Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	





## **CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES**

**Tuesday 22 November 2011 / Mardi 22 novembre 2011**

### **Speech from the throne / Discours du trône**

Hon. David C. Onley (Lieutenant Governor) ..... 3

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)..... 7

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

#### **An Act to perpetuate an ancient parliamentary right, Bill 1, Mr. McGuinty / Loi visant à perpétuer un ancien droit parlementaire, projet de loi 1, M. McGuinty**

First reading agreed to ..... 7

Hon. Dalton McGuinty ..... 7

### **MOTIONS**

#### **Throne speech debate**

Hon. John Milloy ..... 7

Motion agreed to..... 7

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First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 23 November 2011**

**Mercredi 23 novembre 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 23 November 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 23 novembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in our prayers.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I move, seconded by Mrs. Sandals, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Don Valley East has moved that we, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

The member from Don Valley East.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to also congratulate the member from Brant on his recent appointment as Speaker.

I would also like to share my time with the member from Guelph.

**Interjection:** What a combination. Oh, wow.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you.

It's a great honour to respond to the throne speech and to serve in the 40th parliamentary session of the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It is a privilege to gain the confidence of the people of my riding of Don Valley East and to represent my constituents' interests and to be their voice in this House. I am committed to working on behalf of my constituents and with my colleagues in this Legislature to strengthen the province of Ontario.

Don Valley East is a diverse riding. Over 60% of the residents are immigrants to Canada from areas all around the globe. This diversity enriches the cultural fabric of Don Valley East. The unemployment rate in our riding, however, is higher than the national average. This leaves

many residents from all walks of life struggling to find work. My constituents believe that education, job creation and skill training must be given a high priority. They know that this government is committed to this imperative.

This riding also contains a large population of senior citizens. The increasing number of seniors over the next decade will require us to focus on initiatives such as home health care, an aging strategy and making home life more accessible, all of which will allow our seniors to remain engaged in their communities and to enjoy a better quality of life.

Like everyone here today, I owe much to this province. We are indebted to those who have served in this House during its long history and to those who have dedicated their time to help shape this province. I feel privileged to continue this undertaking, one that plays such an important role in the quality of life in Ontario and the key services which we rely on.

I'd like to thank my family for giving me the support to seek this office: my wife, Lori, who is the foundation of our family and who provides me with the love and stability to dedicate my life to helping others. To my beautiful daughters, Myla and Maren, who are the light of my life, thank you so much.

I would also like to thank my predecessor, David Caplan. David has been a public servant for 20 years, and he has represented Don Valley East as a school board trustee and as a member of provincial Parliament. He leaves behind a strong legacy in the community, built on effectively serving the residents of Don Valley East. So, on behalf of the residents of my community, thank you, David, for your long dedication to public service.

My family came to Canada in the mid-1970s, from England. My mother, Sandra Hawley, the daughter of a coal miner from Barnsley, Yorkshire, and my father, Joseph Coteau, the son of a farmer from a small island off the coast of Grenada, called Carriacou, arrived in this country with dreams and hopes of a better life for themselves and their children. My family settled in North York and our Canadian journey began.

I was fortunate enough to grow up in an area with many Ontarians who shared my family's story of a recent arrival. I lived in an apartment building full of families from all parts of the world with whom I could relate. I also met Canadians who could trace their family roots throughout many generations in the history in this country. These are the early experiences of living among people from many different cultural backgrounds that



helped lay my foundation to my personal philosophy of what makes this province so special.

This province has a beautiful heritage, full of tradition and culture, and has become globally admired for taking the best from many cultures and adopting it as its own. My mother and father instilled in my brothers and I the value of hard work. My father, a washing machine repairman, and my mother, a superintendent of a building, worked tirelessly to ensure that we were provided with an opportunity to find successful and productive lives.

My parents, with the help of a strong public education built on generations of hard-working Ontarians, provided me with the skills necessary to take on the challenge of the world around me. I've always considered myself lucky and fortunate to have the support of my family, and we were grateful to have food on the table and parents who earned enough to live comfortably.

In my high school days, I witnessed friends in school who were often left to fend for themselves, attending school hungry—young men who were living on the streets by the age of 14 and some who are no longer with us, victims of violent crime. It's their stories that inspired me to do more for my community, to be involved and to stand up for those who are sometimes not able to do so because regular life carries so much weight.

I'm thankful for a public education that did not give up on me. This is one of the reasons I'm standing before you here today. I have had teachers who have gone the extra mile because they recognized that I was worth the effort. Our public education system enables families, regardless of socio-economic status, to give their children the opportunity to realize their full potential. Our education system is the envy of the world, a vehicle through which our children and our grandchildren will achieve their hopes and dreams. It is a cornerstone of democracy in our great province, and something I will work hard every day to strengthen and protect.

It was in high school where I first became interested in politics. One day, outside of my apartment window, I noticed a group of children playing on the ice that formed in the community swimming pool. It was early spring and the ice was beginning to melt. I yelled down to them, warning them that the ice could break at any time—without success. I went to the superintendent of the building and explained my situation. I asked him if he could have someone fix it, because I was scared something might happen to those children.

0910

The next day there were more kids playing on the ice, so I went down to see the superintendent again, and he told me there was nothing he could do; he already had informed the rental company. After waiting a couple of days—nothing changed—I decided to contact the rental company myself. They advised me that it soon would be fixed.

At that point, I decided to call for help. I opened up my white pages and found the number of my local politician. I had very limited knowledge of what elected officials did, but I decided to call. Within an hour of

making the call, there was a person fixing a hole in that fence. The next day I got a follow-up call to see if the work had been done, and I couldn't believe what happened.

I was surprised, I was in awe, I was shocked, but I was hooked: A 17-year-old boy had a voice. At that point in my life, I didn't know the difference between political parties, ideologies, what issues were making headlines, but I knew one thing: An effective politician could really make a difference in his or her community.

Over the next decade, I went to university, studied politics, worked for a federal cabinet minister and volunteered with organizations that aimed to help people. After finishing school, I had the opportunity to work overseas in South Korea for a couple of years. The transition was understandably difficult. Because of the language barrier, I couldn't enjoy the morning paper or relax in the evening while watching television, and I found it difficult to communicate with people. It was a real eye-opener for me. I was illiterate, lonely, isolated and cut off from the world I was used to. I understood what it was like to be a newcomer who could not speak, write or read the local language.

It was because of the kindness of others that I began to learn how to speak Korean and read and write the language. This serves as a constant reminder to me that as Canadians, we should always reach out to people who are newcomers to this country to lend a helping hand, and that a little bit of kindness can make a world of difference with a newcomer.

When I arrived back in Canada, I decided to run for public office, and I put my name forward as trustee for Don Valley East. My motivation came from my personal experience, but also from my disapproval of policy decisions implemented by the provincial government at that time: Schools were being shut down because of political friction and labour unrest, the dropout rate in Toronto was too high, there was rising poverty and despair among marginalized communities, young people were being suspended from school at an alarming rate, teachers and educational workers were demoralized, and there were many communities in Toronto that just felt left out. I wanted to do my part to help young people in our city reach their full potential. I knew first-hand that education could open doors for those who often felt locked in.

We know that a good education changes lives. It provides people with an opportunity to make their dreams come true and allows them to fully participate in the world around them. When I'm invited into schools to speak to young people, I often talk about the power of education. The fact is that those who learn more tend to live longer, happier lives. Those who learn more are less likely to end up on the wrong side of the law and are more likely to become contributing members of their community. There's simply no doubt that the more one learns, the more one ends up earning throughout their life. They're usually healthier and less likely to adopt bad habits or addictive behaviour.



On December 1, 2003, I took the oath of a school board trustee and, over an eight-year period, I had the opportunity and privilege to represent my community at the Toronto District School Board. As a trustee, I had a first-hand experience of this government in action. With restricted funding, this government has continued to invest in education, making it one of its top priorities. This government has done many great things, and I've seen first-hand how it's benefited our public school system across this province. We have increased test scores, reduced the dropout rate, lowered class sizes, increased educational funding, decreased suspension and expulsion rates, and created full-day kindergarten classes.

But along with this great list of accomplishments, there are some less well-known initiatives that have taken place; projects initiated because it was the right thing to do, projects like Focus on Youth. This project was developed in Toronto, and now it's in many urban cities across the province. This program provides young people summer opportunities by offering free school space to organized, community-based programs and providing employment opportunities and leadership activities for young people.

Or the School Food and Beverage Policy: This new moratorium singlehandedly removed the use of lard and trans fats in our schools. It removed high fat and sodium content from top-selling items like hamburgers, pizza, patties and poutine. These are the kinds of initiatives that this government has invested its time and energy into to ensure that children are set up for success and are given the opportunity to live healthier lives, which is a benefit not only to them, but also eases the burden on our health care system.

In addition to my work at the school board, I have been working in social services and the literacy sector for the last several years. As a community organizer, and more recently as the executive director of a national literacy organization, literacy has become a strong passion of mine. According to Statistics Canada and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in 2005 four out of 10 adult Canadians aged 16 to 65, representing nine million Canadians, struggled with low literacy. We know that literacy impacts lives. People with low literacy are more likely to be unemployed and they tend to work in occupations with lower skill requirements. About 80% of those with high literacy levels are employed, in comparison to 57% of those with low literacy levels.

As our economy shifts and nations around the world become more competitive, we need to make sure that our workforce has the skills necessary to take on the challenges of the new global economy, the new digital economy. It is important to note that adult learners with low levels of literacy are often being left behind and often trail young learners when it comes to digital literacy. There's much more we can do to ensure that adult learners gain the comprehensive digital literacy skills they need to fully participate in our society, so that they too can compete in a world where economic and digital

literacy are increasingly becoming linked. We live in a time of constant technological advancements, and as these innovations improve, so should digital education. It is a crucial element in the way Ontarians, both young and old, will be able to compete in this global economy.

From the time of my youth to the present day, I have viewed the political arena as a place where we can work to improve the lives of our fellow citizens. My purpose is informed by the historical legacy of others who have built what we cherish in this province. It is this sense of purpose and direction that will guide me here today.

I want to thank, again, the residents of my riding of Don Valley East for allowing me to serve as their member and for providing me with the mandate to help others in need and to fight for their causes, representing their interests.

Though we live in the greatest province in the greatest country in the world, we can do better. We can do more to enrich the lives of Ontarians, and we've seen in other governments that simple solutions to complex problems have never worked. Many of our challenges are significant, and it will take a great deal of intellectual capital and personal resolve to meet and find those solutions.

The author and activist Fredrick Douglass once wrote: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." These words give me hope that together, we can make a difference to our fellow Ontarians and build a stronger, more equitable province for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me begin, first of all, Madam Speaker, by congratulating you on your re-election. It's nice to see you back in the chair, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

And my sincere congratulations to the member from Don Valley East. Congratulations on your election victory, and congratulations on your maiden speech. I'm not sure why speeches are female, that they're maiden, but—I'm not sure how that happened.

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** You don't want to go there.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I won't go there, as to women talk a lot. I just won't go there.

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Rosie knows, though.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm not asking Rosie.

But the tradition of the maiden speech around here is really very important, because it allows us to get to know the new members in a way where we learn something about the new members and why they're here. I'm very much looking forward, because there's lots of new members, to hearing all of your maiden speeches so that we can all get to know each other. But, Michael, it was interesting that while our family backgrounds are very different, what got us here was distress over what was happening in education and a passion to fix it.

**0920**

The motion at hand has to do with the throne speech. Considering what His Honour had to say yesterday when



he spoke to us from the throne about looking forward, it was interesting that the Lieutenant Governor spoke to us and emphasized that we are dealing with very difficult times. But while there was a recognition of those difficult times, there was also a sense of optimism that, in fact, we can make progress. There was a sense of optimism that Ontario can meet the global challenges and build on our advantages and that we can, in fact, work together to build a stronger economy in Ontario. We can work together to create more jobs in Ontario so that all our Ontario families can survive this recession, these difficult economic times, and come out in a position to move forward. While there was that recognition of difficulty, I was very pleased that there was also that sense of optimism, that we can move forward.

The Lieutenant Governor explained the serious times we face in respect to the debt crisis in Europe. It's interesting that the world economy, because of the debt crisis in Europe, has actually deteriorated since the time when we tabled our budget last March. But even since the end of the campaign period, we've seen a further deterioration in the world economic situation, driven by Europe.

It's interesting: My husband and I actually managed to get a bit of a holiday after the election was over, and we happened to be in France when the Greek crisis was at its height. We were getting media from the perspective not just of the sort of North American spectator sport of looking at the EU and what's happening there, but we were getting the media reports from the perspective of the British and the French, who, while they weren't directly involved in Greek politics, were obviously going to be much more dramatically and immediately affected. It certainly gave you a sense of the fragility of the whole European economy and the fact that when one country doesn't deal with its debt, it can have that cascading effect, that domino effect, of dragging everybody else down with them.

We also, obviously, are quite aware of the situation that we have with our American neighbour and the understanding that the US seems to have this chronic inability to pull itself out of recession, to pull itself into actually dealing with its debt and its debt crisis.

So with all of this, the world economists, as we know, have downgraded their expectations of growth not just here in Ontario, and I'm sure that the Minister of Finance will have more to say about that this afternoon in his fall economic update. But world economists are telling us that the entire world can expect slower growth than was originally projected when we were looking at budgets, platforms, all of these things.

That's something that members of all parties share. It's simply the reality that we face, and we must work together to figure out how we can resolve that in Ontario or at least manage it in Ontario. But the reality is that Ontario is facing a period of slow growth, just like the rest of the world, and that's the challenge that we all face.

Now, the flip side of that—and there is a flip side—is that in Ontario we've already done some of the hard

lifting. We've already done some of the hard work. So, if you look at some of the things that we've already done—as everybody knows, we've quite dramatically altered our tax system, and in particular by decreasing the taxes on business investment. They've been cut in half since 2009. Because we started to make that move back at the beginning of the recession and started to cut the taxes back then on business investments, what has happened is that Ontario has become more competitive and more welcoming to business growth. So in fact, if you look at Ontario's recent record—we don't have the 2011 results, but we do know what happened in 2010. We know that in 2010 the Financial Times of London named Ontario a top destination for foreign investment in North America. In other words, Ontario, amongst all the North American subnational jurisdictions, has become a magnet for people who want to invest and grow new business. That's a good thing.

Ontario also now has the highest rate of post-secondary educational attainment among the 34 OECD countries—that's the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The member from Don Valley East, in his maiden speech, gave a very eloquent explanation of why it is so important that we invest in education, both for our littlest folks but also particularly at the post-secondary level, so that we can have that economic competitiveness. We know, in fact, that Ontario is never going to win a battle with other jurisdictions on low wage costs. Quite frankly, we don't want to win a battle with other jurisdictions on low wage costs. That's not our market niche. Our market niche is high-skilled workers. Our market niche is attracting investment that takes advantage of a highly skilled workforce. The data simply says that we are there in terms of post-secondary education. If we continue to address that and make that even stronger in terms of the education and skills of our workforce, we have an opportunity to attract even more investment to Ontario.

If I think about my own riding, I'm very proud of some of the programs that are offered by the community college in the Waterloo-Wellington area. Conestoga College has a very interesting degree program in applied engineering where the students are learning not just the academic and theoretical side of engineering but very practical skills. The graduates from that program are snapped up by business as pure gold because they not only have the theoretical knowledge; they know, in a very practical way, how to apply that theoretical knowledge. That's an example of a program where Ontario's graduates can compete very much with the rest of the world, with the rest of North America.

Because we are talking about the speech from the throne, some of you may be interested to know that if any of you have associations with Guelph, what was the old biology building has just been totally retrofitted as a result of the federal-provincial infrastructure investments in post-secondary education. That building has been totally retrofitted and is now a hub for environmental sciences at the University of Guelph. The reason I men-



tion this in the context of the speech from the throne is that a former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Lincoln Alexander, is the chancellor emeritus, a long-serving chancellor at the University of Guelph. That new environmental sciences building, or the retrofitted building, was just last week named after Lincoln Alexander and is now Alexander Hall. So we can be very proud of our former Lieutenant Governor, Lincoln Alexander, but that's another example of educational programs in Ontario which are educating graduates to be able to turn themselves out and have the skills in environmental sciences that business is looking for.

0930

We're not alone in government-generated education. We also have a very strong business sector focusing on innovative new technologies and bringing research ideas into actual practical applications. So again, when I look at some of the things that are happening in my own riding of Guelph, obviously clean energy technologies is something where Ontario has been very successful in developing innovative new technologies. Guelph is a hub, really, for solar energy.

What's probably less known is that Ontario is also becoming a hub for clean water technologies and also clean air technologies. I have a couple of companies in Guelph that are doing extraordinarily innovative work. One, ENPAR, has got some water technologies, in terms of cleansing waste water, that are attracting attention the world over. Another company, Biorem, has technologies that can be used for odour control and for air quality which are being used both in the municipal sewage waste management sector and also in the industrial air quality control sector. So we're doing some really exciting things in Ontario and we have—

*Interruption.*

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Sorry, I'm laughing here. I should explain to the viewers that one of the rules is that while we all have BlackBerrys hidden away here, you're not supposed to let them ring, and one of the new members just got caught by the Sergeant-at-Arms for the first time with her ringing phone. But we'll all learn the rules. It's okay. And a lot of the veteran members still haven't figured out how to turn their phones off either.

Anyway, we actually have a lot of opportunities here in Ontario. So between the challenges and the opportunities, that's exactly what the throne speech recognized, Speaker—and it's great to see you in the chair there. Congratulations. We're having revolving Speakers this morning.

When we look at the throne speech, it outlines a serious plan on how Ontario can move forward, both recognizing the serious times that we're in, the challenging times, but also recognizing the opportunities that we have to move forward, to grow the economy, to create jobs and to have Ontario emerge from this mandate stronger than ever. We are, and I make no apology for this, focused on implementing our campaign plan because we believe that our campaign plan is a good plan. We campaigned on it. It has some very important

initiatives in it and we are going to focus on those very important initiatives.

The initiatives that are pulled out as a focus are initiatives that I think have a common theme, and the common theme of those initiatives is that they have two strengths. In each case, they help individuals and individual families. We recognize that families are struggling and that we need to support Ontario families, so the initiatives that we're going to focus on moving forward help individual families. But while helping individual families, each of those initiatives also helps to grow the Ontario economy; they also support economic development. So if I was going to say there's a common theme in the initiatives that we're focusing on, it's that they have the advantage of both helping families and helping the economy at the same time. I think that's a very valuable approach that we're taking, and that was recognized in the speech from the throne yesterday.

Let me talk about some of those specific initiatives that were mentioned as highlights in the speech yesterday. First of all, let's talk about my first love: education. Of course, we recognized that we need to move forward with the implementation of full-day kindergarten, because it is important that while we're dealing with an immediate crisis, a short-term crisis, we take the long view in how we respond to that crisis so that we're not just responding to the crisis, but we're also setting up the conditions for future economic success while we address the immediate challenges. Certainly, full-day kindergarten is one of those programs that we're very proud of, where we are addressing not just the immediate need to make sure that little folks have a good start, but the long-term educational needs. So we will carry on with full-day kindergarten.

We're also going to pursue the 30% tuition cut for college and university students, for undergraduate post-secondary students. It's interesting: I come from a university town, so it's sort of fairly obvious that the students in my university town were very, very pleased to hear about a 30% tuition cut for middle-income families. That was obviously very well received by the students, and you would expect that.

But what was interesting was that before we announced our platform—and I started going door to door back in June and went all summer. Before we announced our platform, as I was going door to door in average, everyday neighbourhoods in Guelph, I was often hearing from families—and not just the parents of post-secondary students but also the grandparents of post-secondary students—who talked about how they recognize the importance of making sure that their sons and daughters got a post-secondary education, be it at college or university or in the apprenticeship area. But they talked about how difficult they were finding it to be able to afford the tuition, particularly if they happened to have two or three young people in university or college at the same time. I heard the same thing from grandparents, not just parents: grandparents who were concerned about whether their grandchildren would be able to afford to go to post-



secondary education, because the grandparents too recognize the importance of post-secondary education for their grandchildren.

This was an issue that the community was raising to me before the platform came: the challenge of getting their post-secondary-age offspring into college and university. So I was obviously absolutely thrilled, when our platform was announced, that there will be a 30% tuition cut, and that's something that we will be pursuing.

Just to give people a little bit more detail about how that works, it will apply to families with a family income of less than \$160,000. The 30% tuition cut is calculated based on the average undergraduate tuition. As you do the calculation this year, if a student is in university, 30% of the average annual tuition this year is \$1,600 per year, per student. College tuitions are cheaper, so if you were to do 30% of the average college tuition this year, that would be a \$730 increase.

0940

Now, I want to say that I know the Conservative caucus campaigned against this, so I want to speak to the NDP caucus, because what I found at all-candidates meetings was that you too were interested in how to manage tuition costs for post-secondary. What I was finding was that there was a misconception, I think, in the NDP speaking notes, because my NDP candidate, who was a very good candidate, had this discussion sometimes at debates. Because of the way the tuition cut is calculated—that is, 30% of the average—if tuition goes up, then 30% of the average will go up. So the way we are calculating the tuition cut means that it's automatically indexed. I know the NDP was more interested in a freeze on tuition, but what we're doing—cutting tuition this way—means it's actually automatically indexed. So the 30% level will continue to be there. As I said, that's going to help individual families manage their costs.

But because we also know that 70% of the jobs in the new economy are going to require a post-secondary education, we're also going to ensure that our workers of the future are well educated and able to take those jobs, particularly the jobs that we want to attract to Ontario as we move forward. So, again, there's this combination of helping families and supporting economic development.

We also want to be sure that, as we help families afford post-secondary education, there will be space for every student at college and university. In our first two terms, we added 200,000 spaces at college and university. We will plan, during this mandate, to add 60,000 additional spaces at college and university, and one of the ways in which we are proposing to do that is to set up three new undergraduate campuses in Ontario to make sure that that capacity is there to deal with all the qualified students in Ontario. To me, that's very exciting news, indeed: that we're going to be moving forward on the education portfolio.

Another thing that we hear about, of course, constantly—and you hear about it when you knock on the doors of families—is the concern about seniors. We all know that it's a matter of demographic fact that the proportion

of the population who are seniors is going to grow. There are going to be more seniors in Ontario; that's one of the realities with which we need to plan for the future in Ontario.

What we also know is that seniors prefer, if possible, to live at home. Who wouldn't prefer to live at home? They want to have a comfortable home, a home where they feel connected to the community. To quote Joanne Young Evans, who is the president of Guelph Independent Living, "Seniors will tell you, and have told those who will listen, how ... the Aging at Home program has kept many from moving into long-term care."

Aging at Home tends to focus on health and social supports, and that's a big and important part of the story on Aging at Home, but the other piece of the story on Aging at Home is that sometimes home just physically doesn't work. There are physical impediments to staying at home that have to do with the structure of the home itself. So what we are proposing is to create a healthy home renovation tax credit. This would be a tax credit where the person renovating the home for the senior—and it might be a situation where the senior mom lives with the daughter and her family, so it isn't even necessarily mom's original home. It might be the family home where mom is now living. But if there is a problem with accessibility in that home, for example, the tax credit would apply to that, and it would be up to \$1,500 annually on a home renovation.

These would be things like: What happens if you want to have a ramp so you can get in and out of the front door? Obviously, if you're living at home, you want to be able to come and go into the community. So it might be building a ramp. Lots of us have two-storey houses; what if you can't get up the steps to the bedroom? Well, you could have a chair lift installed on the steps. What about tubs? Tubs are often difficult. You might need to change the tub in the family bathroom into a bathroom with a walk-in shower instead. There are all sorts of physical impediments that we can help seniors to address.

Again, that supports the senior in staying in their home. It supports the family in helping their mom or dad to stay in a home. It also supports the economy, because we have the experience of knowing from previous tax credits which are related to home renovations that when there's a tax credit related to home renovation, the home renovation part of the construction industry picks up. This is going to stimulate the home renovation sector within the construction industry and create jobs in home renovation, so we're not only helping families, but we're also supporting economic development and economic growth and creating jobs here in Ontario.

Now, as I mentioned before, one of the things that is the companion piece to the physical reno to the home is making sure that the community supports are there to support that. We know that as seniors age there is a high demand for home care services, so what we are also committed to doing is providing the personal support necessary for seniors to stay in their homes. So we will be providing more support for home care for seniors.



Again, this helps the individual, but it also helps us as taxpayers because if somebody can stay in their own home or in a family home rather than requiring long-term care or hospitalization, that's actually good for us as taxpayers, because it's much more cost-effective to support people staying in their own homes than it is to have to institutionalize people in some way through long-term-care homes or hospitalization. So again, there's this dual approach of helping families and supporting economic growth and job creation.

Now, one of the other things that we're going to do—and this is one that only obliquely applies to my riding but I think is very, very important—is the fact that we have committed to public transit. That is important in my riding, that we're committing to public transit. In particular, we are committed to making sure that we're going to start introducing all-day two-way GO train service.

**950**

Again, that's good for the economy. We're helping people get to work. We're helping the environment by getting more people on transit, cutting down on the demand for new highways, or at least making sure trucks can get through a little bit more quickly. So there are some economic aspects to that, but it absolutely helps the individual commuters, who need to get back and forth to work in a way which is much more efficient than sitting in a car.

The reason I say that this obliquely affects my riding, and also the member for Kitchener Centre's, is that in that philosophic commitment to public transit, we are also extending the Georgetown GO line out to Guelph and Kitchener. More on that soon—but again, great initiatives that will help individual families and help us grow the economy.

Okay, so you say, "But you are ignoring the problem that you started off with, which is debt and deficit and economic challenge. You can't ignore that." You're absolutely right. We can't; we don't intend to. We know that we've got some tough challenges there, and we know that we're going to have to manage the deficit. That is part of our plan.

Even though we understand that we are facing a period of quite slow growth, we remain committed to balancing the budget by the 2017-18 fiscal year. Interestingly, that was the commitment which was made by all parties and is now actually the commitment that's being made by the federal government: The target for balancing the budget is 2017-18. I think that in this House we have agreement on that. I certainly know that when we were debating during the campaign, all or almost all of the candidates agreed on that. The Conservative candidate, the NDP candidate, the Green Party candidate and, obviously, the Liberal candidate all agreed that the target was to get the budget balanced by 2017.

Now, I must admit that the Communist candidate and the independent anarchist candidate had a viewpoint that we should ignore the deficit. And the Libertarian thought we should have the budget balanced—and more—tomorrow because he was just going to cut all public services.

But in terms of anybody who's actually represented in this House, 2017-18 is the target we all set and which I presume we all remain committed to. Certainly, the government remains committed to that target.

We know that we're going to have to look very carefully at some strategies on how we rein in government spending. To that end, Don Drummond has been appointed to have a look at our expenditures and make some proposals on how we can deliver services to the people of Ontario more efficiently and more effectively. That report will be coming out after Christmas sometime, and I think we will all look with great interest at the suggestions that Mr. Drummond makes.

But this is not an exclusive opportunity for Mr. Drummond to make suggestions. We welcome suggestions from both of the parties as to how we can deliver government services more effectively and more efficiently, and of course we welcome suggestions from all sorts of stakeholders and the public as well. This is going to be a very difficult discussion, and the more of us who put our constructive suggestions on how we can use tax dollars more effectively, the more ideas we have, the better the chance of finding the really good ideas there and figuring out how we're going to work through this.

The speech did outline some principles. As we look at, "How do we spend taxpayer dollars more effectively?" it did set out a number of principles that we are committed to following. I'd just like to review the principles that were laid out in the speech from the throne.

First off, health care and education are the most important public services for Ontario families, so any reforms must not compromise the quality of health care or education services. We reject across-the-board cuts, the sort of thing where you go in and say, "Okay, we're just going to cut everything in every ministry by X%." We don't think that works very well. We've seen that approach with the previous government, and that's too blunt an instrument. If we're going to find the places where we can be more effective and more efficient, we don't just come in and do the across-the-board slash and burn. We do reject that approach.

That approach would inevitably mean deep cuts to health and education, because when you look at where we spend the most money in this province, we spend the most money in health care and education. So as soon as you start to talk about across-the-board cuts, you are by definition saying, "We're going after health care and education," in a very blunt way. We're rejecting that.

Any reforms must help the province get better value for money through improved efficiencies and greater productivity. A great example of that—because I think sometimes people wonder what we're talking about when we talk about value for money—is what we already did: the good work of Minister Matthews, the Minister of Health, on controlling the cost of generic drugs, where we were able to come in and say, "Ontarians are spending too much for generic drugs." We were able to bring in changes to the way we pay for generic drugs and to bring down the cost of generic drugs, and with the sav-



ings we were able to add new drugs to the formulary. That's value for money. We're getting a bigger bang for the buck and better access to new drugs, and Ontarians are paying generic drug prices that are now similar to what was already happening in the US and Europe.

That's a great example of the sort of projects that we're looking for, in terms of value for money. We think we can find more of those and continue to deliver great services, but in a more cost-effective way. Those would be some of the principles that we've already set out.

In addition to that sort of, "We have to have a discussion," there are some very specific things we're already doing. We're on target to cut the size of the public service by 5% by March 2012. We've been actually working on that for several years, and we had set the target of 5% by March 2012. We are on target to achieve that, and we are going to set a target of a further 2% decrease in the size of the public service by 2014. That will produce some significant savings for Ontario taxpayers.

We're also going to look at major agencies and identify savings in some of the major agencies: \$200 million is the target by 2014. Many people are totally unaware that one of the things that we actually did last spring was we identified about a dozen agencies that had outlived their usefulness and simply got rid of the agencies. That's something that we're hoping to continue to do: Where an agency can either be combined with other agencies so that we're not duplicating, or just simply has outlived its usefulness, we need to look at, do we need those agencies?

And then the other commitment we have made is that, in cases where new spending isn't part of the plan that we have laid out in the speech from the throne—and inevitably, ministers do come to the treasury board and say, "Oh, this wasn't in the plan but I need X million dollars to do whatever." The minister will be told, "If you really need to do that, find the savings within your budget. If it isn't in the plan, we're not doing a whole bunch of other new stuff."

So we do have a very detailed and sound plan here for dealing with the deficit. It's interesting: When I was going door to door, it's the first time people have ever really said, "What about the deficit? What are you going to do about that?" And when I said to people, "You know, we promised less than any other party. Our campaign platform makes less promises than anybody else's," people said, "Great. I'm glad to hear that." Because what voters said was, "We don't believe you anymore. If a politician comes to my door and says, 'I'm going to cut your taxes and give you more,' I don't believe you." Well, we don't believe it either, so that's why we told voters, "We're not going to cut your taxes, we're not going to increase your taxes, and we're not going to promise you the world." But we do believe that we can manage the deficit and continue to make some key investments in the Ontario economy that will help Ontario families and allow us to continue to grow the Ontario economy and create jobs.

I want to heartily endorse the speech from the throne which His Honour read to us yesterday, and encourage

our colleagues across the floor to also give very serious consideration to endorsing the speech from the throne, because we do need a plan for Ontario to collectively move forward, to meet the challenges but also to seize the opportunities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. John Milloy:** No further business, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** There being no further business, I declare the House recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1003 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Okay, off we go. Introduction of visitors, our guests to Queen's Park. Are there any introductions? Yes, member.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Durham. I'd like to introduce some of my guests.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** From Durham? I wouldn't have known. The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your new duties. Warren McCarthy, Cindy Taub, Joy Tavener, Sierra Tavener and Brenda Tavener are visiting from my riding of Durham.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from—I wouldn't have known either—Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm sure you'll get to know that riding name well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It's the longest in the House.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to welcome and introduce a good friend and chief financial officer from my riding association, Shawn Morrison from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm ecstatic that you know my riding name; this is a good thing.

I'd like to introduce Fred LeBlanc and Mark McKinnon from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association.

## LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that Mr. Hudak, the member from the electoral



district of Niagara West–Glanbrook, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. I'm told to rejuvenate a tradition to introduce Her Majesty's loyal opposition, and I decided that was a good idea.

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE LEGISLATURE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do beg the indulgence of the House to make members aware of certain new developments with respect to technology and the distribution of information at the Legislative Assembly.

Members may have noticed by now that at the entrance point of each of the chamber lobbies, we have installed an electronic bulletin board. This will display information on upcoming events in the building, committee meetings, schedules, construction alerts and other announcements. The intent is to provide members with an update and easy means of finding out the dates, times and locations of various activities at Queen's Park.

In addition, the live broadcast of the House proceedings on the Legislative Assembly's website has recently been upgraded. Aside from some behind-the-scenes technological improvements, the service is now available on most smart phones and tablets. Members and citizens of Ontario can access the webcast on their mobile devices through the link on the Legislative Assembly's website.

Finally, members will be delighted to know and learn that the Legislative Assembly is proceeding through the 21st century at lightning speed and is currently engaged in the installation of WiFi access points throughout the building.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All right, I'm not taking a vote on this.

As you might imagine, the age of and construction of the building have caused some challenges in this regard. While some access points currently exist, the thick walls do require a more extensive installation appliance for other areas. Notwithstanding those difficulties, we anticipate that full wireless capacity will not be too far off in the future.

I might add that this in no way alters the current rules against the use of electronic devices in this chamber. Thank you.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just wanted to take this opportunity on behalf of all members of the government to congratulate you on your election as Speaker, to assure you of our wholehearted support and to say very much that we look forward to working with you in the interest of all Ontarians.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I'll hold you to that.

It is now time for oral questions.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Before I begin, Speaker, let me also say, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, congratulations. I look forward to working with you. And, my goodness, in 24 hours, all those announcements. You sure move fast.

I also want to say, through you, Speaker, to the 31 new members of the assembly, of all three parties: I remember my first day here, back in 1995. It's a thrill to serve in this place and to be one of the 107 members who have the honour, of all the millions of Ontarians, to take their seat here. I want to say congratulations to all the new members, and welcome here to the assembly.

My question is to the Premier. Premier, the province of Ontario faces an extraordinary spending crisis. One option that we have brought forward that you have failed to deliver on is a public sector wage freeze to rein in runaway costs in the public service. Premier, do you agree that a public sector wage freeze is an important tool to rein in runaway government spending?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Thank you, Speaker; it is good to be back. It's especially good to be sitting on your right-hand side, I must say.

I want to, first of all, begin by extending to my honourable colleague my congratulations, to him and each and every member of his party, on their election and to again assure them of our desire to work with them in the interest of Ontarians.

I want to begin as well to say to the people of Ontario that they will recognize, of course, that we find ourselves living in turbulent times when it comes to the status of the global economy. There are yet more ill winds blowing out of Europe today. The US economy remains very much stagnant, and of course that's having a consequence on our economy here.

But we have a solid plan. We have a responsible plan. We will continue to invest in the skills and education of our people. We will invest in infrastructure. We will move ahead with our tax reforms. And we look forward to all the good ideas that might be offered by the opposition, including the leader of the official opposition himself, when it comes to measures we should put in place at the time of our upcoming budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, Speaker, maybe the Premier's opening the door, then. I asked him very directly if he supports a public sector wage freeze to rein in runaway costs. He seemed to indicate that his door is open to such. I'll ask him again.

Premier, as you know, about 60%, 60 cents on every dollar that the government spends, is on wages and benefits: compensation. If you truly want to rein in the cost of government spending, you have to do something about runaway wages and benefits. Let me ask you directly, because it sounds like you're now opening the

door: Do you support a public sector wage freeze in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at, more specifically, what we have done to date. We have not funded wage increases for the public sector. My honourable colleague will know that when it comes to negotiated settlements by broader public sector employers, we have made it clear to them that should they negotiate something beyond zero, we will not in fact be funding that. They'll have to find those monies from within. So we have, in fact, stood up for taxpayers in that regard.

But where we think we need to move now is by way of introduction of new reforms into the way that we deliver services so that we can introduce more efficiencies and increase productivity inside government.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, that's what I was worried about, Speaker: The Premier has gone back to his old ways. He does not seem to be open to new ideas; he is simply saying that he hopes those in the broader public sector may get a wage freeze, and if they don't, well, then, they don't get any new money. But, Premier, you know that means they have to cut back on services.

What we need to do is to rein in the size and cost of government, and part of that should be, in our view, a mandatory public sector wage freeze across the public service. Premier, this will save you up to \$2 billion for a two-year wage freeze. It is a reasonable proposal. And at a time when those in the private sector have had to cut back, at a time when we've seen 75,000 private sector jobs leave this province since the election, Premier, isn't it reasonable to ask our public servants to take a pay freeze in the two years ahead?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I want to encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at last year's budget. If you take a look at page 53, and for the following 28 pages, there's a section there called "Managing Responsibly" that talks about saving \$1.5 billion. One of those measures involves reducing the size of the OPS by 7%. We'll have reduced it by 5% by the end of March of this coming year, and then 2% over the course of the next two years beyond that. That alone will save us \$500 million in permanent fashion. We think that's a thoughtful, measured, responsible way.

Again I say to my honourable colleague: We are particularly interested in the kinds of measures that will introduce new reforms so that we have permanent efficiencies that don't lead to catch-up costs coming down the road.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier. Well, you know, Premier, we did look at last year's budget, and your deficit has actually gone up to \$16 billion. While other provinces are seeing their deficits go down—seeing

the federal government's go down—you're actually increasing the deficit in the province of Ontario, and you had not one single new idea in yesterday's empty throne speech to take on the serious challenges we face.

Premier, we have a spending crisis in the province of Ontario, and all we get from you is warmed-up, old ideas—nothing new. It is not a serious plan, so we're going to help you out. Later today, we'll table an amendment to the throne speech to bring in a mandatory public sector wage freeze to help get spending under control.

Premier, it's the right thing to do. Will you support our initiative?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm hoping at some point in time that my honourable colleague will reference our shared responsibility to protect health care and education in Ontario.

I'll remind my honourable colleague as well that when we put in place those 400 new schools and those 18 new hospitals, and hired those 12,000 new nurses, those 10,000 more teachers and those water inspectors and meat inspectors, not once did any member of the opposition say, "I don't want any new schools in my riding. I don't want any new hospitals in my riding. I don't want any new meat inspectors and water inspectors in my riding."

The fact of the matter is, we did play some serious catch-up in improving the quality of our public services, and now, just as it was right to make those investments, it's our shared responsibility to ensure we put them on a sustainable footing, and we'll do that in a way that protects health care and protects education.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, Premier, Ontario families sent us to Queen's Park with a very clear message: to stand up for taxpayers, to get spending under control, to actually reduce the size and cost of government, because we can't afford your runaway deficits anymore.

Premier, a very simple initiative, one that has taken place in British Columbia, one that Quebec did, one that we should do here in the province of Ontario—you brought in a voluntary public sector wage freeze that has been an utter failure over the last two years. It is time, Premier, to show leadership. It is time to have courage and take the next step. Premier, will you do the right thing, which other provinces have embraced in a fiscal crisis? Will you bring in a mandatory—not voluntary—public sector wage freeze in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to restate, for the benefit of my honourable colleague: We are not funding wage increases.

And I want to differ from him in terms of his interpretation of the mandate that we have all received here. Yes, Ontarians want us to be very careful with their money, but they also want us to protect their health care and their education. They also want us to bring our very best creative thinking to bear on introducing new reforms and efficiencies into the way that we deliver their public services.



So I think our mandate is a bit more complex than my honourable colleague might acknowledge. It's about a lot more than just getting the cost of government down. It's also about protecting health care and education. It's about introducing exciting new reforms and innovations into the way that we deliver government services so that they are on a sustainable footing, Speaker. That's how I see our mandate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, it is time for bold action. It is time to have some courage to rein in runaway government spending in the province. All we got from you in yesterday's throne speech was a bunch of fluff: old, warmed-over promises.

Premier, governments often like to brag about their first 100 days in office, but in your first 48, there has not been one new idea. It has been nothing but one 48-day slumber, and I'm not optimistic that in the next 52 days you'll bring in anything new.

Here is a good idea that has been adopted by other provinces, that President Obama has brought in in the States, that Prime Minister Cameron has brought in in Great Britain: If we want to actually be serious about runaway government spending, it is time for a mandatory public sector wage freeze here in Ontario.

We'll bring it forward. Will you allow your Liberal members to vote for the right thing, to finally take bold action here to rein in public spending?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, Speaker, I differ somewhat from my honourable colleague in terms of the interpretation of the mandate that we have together received.

I think Ontarians are looking for some stability; I think they're looking for some certainty. They want something that runs counter to what is unfolding in the global economy. They see the news pouring into their homes nightly about the challenges associated with the European economy, the world's biggest trading bloc, and about the challenges associated with the US economy, the world's biggest economy. They want to know what we can do here in Ontario to not only ensure that we are getting better value for their dollars, but do it in a way that protects health care, protects education, and introduces reforms and innovations into our public services.

That's the mandate that we see and that's the one that we intend to deliver on.

## POWER PLANTS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker. Of course, on behalf of the New Democrats, I'd like to congratulate you on your position as the Speaker of the assembly and say that we will do our best to behave ourselves and help you with the dignity of the House.

I also want to say that it's really refreshing to see so many new faces in the Legislature. I'm sure that all of us

will be committed to working hard for the people of Ontario, because that's who put us here and that's who we need to respect.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Energy announced that there was going to be a cancellation of a nearly-built energy plant in Mississauga. My question is a simple one to the Premier: When is he going to disclose to us the cost of that cancellation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, first, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the leader of the third party and each and every member of her caucus on their election to this Legislature, and assure her of our genuine desire to work together in the interests of the people of Ontario.

We're very pleased that we have been able to stop work at this particular site and that we have been able to honour a commitment made to the people living in that community. Right now, I can assure you that discussions are under way in earnest between the OPA and the builder involved, the company involved. Those discussions are complicated and they will take some time, but we will succeed in the end at protecting the interests of the people in that community, at relocating that plant and at ensuring as well that we do this for the lowest possible cost.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Gee, Speaker, I hope the Premier wasn't telling us that he has no idea how much this is going to cost.

Earlier this year, the Premier announced the cancellation of a similar plant in Oakville. Now media have reported that that cancellation is likely going to cost upwards of about \$1 billion. When is the Premier going to tell us exactly how much it's costing to cancel these plants?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** First of all, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the leader of the third party for her support for the positions that we've taken with respect to both of these plants—not an uncontroversial decision in both cases, but it has been very good to have her support in both instances with respect to the decisions that we made.

Again, Speaker, I want to assure you, and Ontario taxpayers and electricity ratepayers, that there are discussions under way. We are doing everything we can to conclude those at the earliest possible opportunity, but they are necessarily complicated. At the same time, I want to assure you that the Minister of Energy is now looking at new standards to put in place when it comes to locating these plants in the first place.

We've already sited and have running seven others, Speaker. The last two, numbers 8 and 9, have proven to be more challenging, and we intend to ensure that we have the right kinds of standards that reflect Ontarians' values today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, maybe the Premier should take our advice far before he gets into these



deals. We wouldn't have to cancel them and cost the public a heck of a lot of money.

I think that we have asked very clearly for the Auditor General to have a look at these contracts and disclose to the public exactly what it's costing us, and I think that's what we need to do. Will the Premier agree to do that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** You know, Speaker, it's up to the leader of the third party to ask whatever she might deem appropriate of the Auditor General.

What I can say is that we're going to work as hard as we can to move our electricity plan forward. We're not only rebuilding new generation of the more traditional variety like gas plants, we're not only expanding hydro-electric capacity, we're not only cleaning up our air, but we are seizing exciting new opportunities in the clean energy sector.

Last year was the first year that the world spent more on renewable technologies than they did on oil and gas. We know where the world is going; we're going to be there first. We're the strongest contender in North America today. We've created 20,000 jobs so far. Our intention is to create 50,000 by the end of the coming year.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the government's throne speech emphasized the fiscal challenges that are facing our province, yet the Premier keeps making decisions that erode this province's fiscal capacity. How can he explain this?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'm sure I didn't hear the last bit of my honourable colleague's question.

What I can say is that we are seized with a number of challenges. One of those, of course, is to ensure that we find ways to grow this economy and to create more jobs, and our clean energy plan is a great example of Ontario seizing new opportunities. The other day, Speaker, I learned that when it comes to the gross revenues for the province of Alberta, for example, 40% of those revenues come from oil and gas royalties. We don't have that opportunity here in Ontario, so we've got to go out there and seize new opportunities as we are doing in clean, renewable technologies. We think clean water technology presents some wonderful opportunities here as well. We have a strong foundation of expertise in entrepreneurs and researchers here in Ontario and there is a growing global demand for what we have to offer, both in terms of technologies and services as well.

So, yes, we've got to ensure that we get our government spending in control, but at the same time, Speaker, we've got to make sure that we grow the economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, since 2009, Ontario's largest corporations have received a 20% tax cut worth over \$1 billion. Meanwhile, people have seen their income erode. Why is the Premier spending scarce dollars on further corporate tax giveaways?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, my honourable colleague will know that we have, in fact, a balanced plan. If

you take a look at the 2010 budget, over the ensuing three years we're reducing the tax burden on individuals by \$12 billion and on our businesses by close to \$5 billion. Again: \$12 billion for our families; \$5 billion for our businesses.

It's easy to dislike corporations and businesses in the abstract, but they employ our people. I'm proud of the fact that foreign direct investment—for example, a publication in the UK has recently said that when you look at all of North America, the second-best place to invest, after California, is Ontario, Canada.

More recently, Forbes magazine in the US has said that Canada is now the best place in the world to invest, and that's because Ontario made its tax changes, including those my honourable colleague would have me now change back.

The foundation of a strong economy, in part, is a competitive tax system. That's what we're working hard to put in place, both for families and for businesses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier talks about balance. I certainly don't know what balance looks like from his perspective, but here's the reality: Families were knocked for a loop during the recession, and their government didn't help them. Their ERs have been closed, and they got hit with the unfair HST. And often the very companies that laid them off benefited from the HST.

Why is the Premier planning once again to hit families when he's prepared to throw billions and billions of dollars out the door in corporate tax cuts, payoffs to private power companies and that kind of direction, when it's families that need a break in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I could go into a long list of what we've done for families, but why don't we talk about the future for a moment? I would ask my honourable colleague to consider supporting these measures that we want to put in place.

We will soon introduce in this House a provision to put in place a healthy homes renovation tax credit. That helps families in their homes; it also strengthens our economy, creates jobs and reduces pressure on the health care budget. We also want to introduce a new tuition grant that helps families in their homes. It also builds a stronger workforce, which means a more competitive economy in a highly competitive era of globalization. Those are practical, pragmatic, sensible ideas, and I would ask my honourable colleague to give some thought to supporting those because they, in fact, help families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I wanted to make sure that the leaders had the opportunity to speak directly to the Premier. I want to make a point to the House: I've noticed a trend, and I am making a list—it's getting close to Christmas. I wanted to let you know that I've been hearing the back and forth, and I'm hoping that we can reverse that trend a little bit. Let's just keep it down and continue our questioning, please.

Member from Thornhill.



## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, 20 months ago you promised the people of Ontario you'd get your house in order by implementing a public sector wage freeze. Given your track record, it's not surprising nobody here believed you would actually get the job done or keep your word. Sure enough, by every standard, you have failed. Your so-called wage freeze was anything but a wage freeze.

We have a plan to get your house in order: a legislated mandatory wage freeze for the public sector. Since your plan was an unmitigated disaster, will you now accept our plan?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Thank you for the question. We did lay out a plan where we did not fund compensation increases in the public and broader public sector. I note you haven't used the words "broader public sector," and you haven't addressed the issues around the ability of the government to do that legislatively. You haven't addressed the serious court issues that have been raised. I think we have a responsibility to look at all of those facts. I think we have a responsibility as a Legislature to look at those in the context of other difficult choices that will face us.

I concur that, as time goes on, we are going to have to take difficult choices. What I would ask my colleague opposite to do is to look at the challenges associated with a range of policy options so that we can get it right. I was actually quite pleased when your party adopted our budget numbers in your platform; that was a wise choice. Built into that was zero wage increase for both the public and the broader public sectors. You did torque up your revenue numbers, which the auditor likely would find kind of laughable, especially now.

We laid out a plan. That plan is working. It is creating jobs. We're in difficult times in the world. We will continue to respond in a balanced, reasonable and fair fashion to get Ontario back on to a strong footing for a better future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Minister, getting public sector salaries under control is not the only place that you have failed—far from it. You have presided over Ontario for 58 months, dragging down the rest of Canada in job creation. You have never balanced a budget, and you change your deficit numbers more often than the Leafs change goalies.

1100

You can't create jobs, you can't balance a budget—you can't even keep your word. It says a lot about what the Premier thinks of the group over there when the first thing he did was to reappoint you as finance minister.

Since you have failed so miserably to get public sector salaries under control, will you at least take our advice and legislate a mandatory wage freeze for the public sector?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, I think we should talk about some facts. In fact, this government balanced

three budgets. In fact, we eliminated a hidden deficit that that party left behind; that's number one.

Number two, in terms of jobs—and the members opposite may want to play gotcha politics and trade in personal insults. For our part, in these challenging times, we're going to take a serious look and really talk about the facts. There have been challenges on the jobs side, but let me just point out that during the first 10 months of this year, 45.7% of all new Canadian jobs were created here in Ontario. That's larger than our percentage of the economy, Mr. Speaker. The unemployment rate is far too high, but it is well below the levels it was found at during the recession.

There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker; we saw what happened to Germany and international markets today. The member opposite may want to trade in name-calling and other things which I think are really unfortunate, given the need for all of us to work together and given the need for this Legislature to address the problems. The people of Ontario reject any call that they make for having another election starting next week. We just had one seven weeks ago. We pledged to work with the opposition to make the right choices to build a better Ontario.

I did ask the opposition for their input into the budget. I got a press release back with a copy of Changebook—never even had a proper written response. I want to thank the New Democrats for sharing theirs with us.

I hope you'll take a more mature approach to the very difficult challenges facing our province.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Nickel Belt.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci, monsieur le Président, et félicitations. If you'll indulge me, I'd like to acknowledge that the mayor for the city of Greater Sudbury is here. Ms. Marianne Matichuk just joined us.

My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last week, the Toronto Star reported on atrocious cases of abuse. We're talking rapes, bone fractures, traumatic brain injury and severe neglect in our long-term-care homes. It happened under this minister's watch, while she had a duty to protect them. In 2010 the Ombudsman warned the government about this, and the minister assured him that it would be addressed.

Those 77,000 people are precious to me and to many other Ontarians. They deserve our protection. Why has the minister failed them so badly?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for the question. I can tell you that anyone who read those articles was as horrified and as appalled as I was. I don't think there is any question that all of us agree that when someone we love goes into long-term care, we should be able to expect that they will receive only the highest quality of care.



That is exactly why, Speaker, we have completely reformed our Long-Term Care Act. We have new legislation and new inspection procedures. Indeed, the reason that this information is publicly available is because we have chosen to make it publicly available. We believe that that transparency—which is painful, of course, but it is only through transparency that we will achieve real change.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mr. Speaker, the transparency was there for everyone to see, but nothing was done while seniors were being raped and being victimized. They were being abused in every possible way and everybody could read it on the Internet, but nothing was done. It took a Toronto Star series to get the minister moving on the problem, a problem that her own ministry's inspector had put in black and white in front of her.

Ontarians expect better than this from their Ministry of Health. How can the minister explain how the serious abuses uncovered by her own inspector were never addressed?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I think the member opposite has done an extraordinary disservice to the people of this province and the people who work in our long-term-care homes, the people who have devoted their lives to caring for people in our long-term-care homes.

It is not perfect. It is significantly better than it was before, and it is getting even better. My deepest thanks go to people who work in long-term care, who are making things better, who are reducing falls, reducing pressure ulcers and improving medication errors. There is significant improvement.

We are not where we all want to be. I can tell you, Speaker, when I read the articles, I called an emergency meeting of people from long-term care. They are committed to continue and accelerate the progress.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, with my experience as a former public school trustee, I know first-hand that Ontario kids excel academically. I know that test scores are up and dropout rates are down in Ontario schools, and I know that our education system is the best in the English-speaking world. But there are other very important things that we need to do better in our schools.

Bullying has become a serious issue with serious effects on our young people. Recently, there have been several devastating stories about children taking their own lives, in part because they couldn't bear the teasing, ridicule and bullying that they were subjected to at our schools. Minister, what are you going to do to make sure that our schools are a place where kids feel safe?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for her first question and welcome her here to the Legislature. It's a privilege for

each of us to represent the interest of Ontarians here. I know that the member's constituents in Scarborough—Agincourt will benefit from her experience and dedication to her community.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with the member from Scarborough—Agincourt that bullying is a very serious issue. That's why the Premier has asked me to look at what is being done and what more we can do, and to look at jurisdictions around the world. We are leading when it comes to ensuring that our schools are safe and inclusive, but it is incumbent on each and every one of us—government, community, teachers, parents—to find the pathway to ensure what more we can do and how we can ensure that every student is safe and included and welcome in Ontario's schools. That is our commitment to the people and the families of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased that you acknowledge the serious threat that bullying presents to our young people, but this isn't a problem that just happens in our schools. New technology like social networking websites has opened up new arenas where bullying can happen. Mental health problems often first develop when kids are very young. I know that the government has programs and policies in place already aimed at making our schools a place where kids feel safe, welcome and respected. But this is a multifaceted problem, and it can't be solved in the school alone.

As a society we need to be more accepting of differences. Minister, what is your ministry doing to help kids who are struggling through issues of bullying and mental health?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** The member is absolutely right. The issue of mental health supports is so connected to the challenges that exist in so many communities. But I want to highlight that our work on this important issue has begun.

Many of you in this Legislature will recall the historic steps that were made as we invested some \$257 million as part of a children's first comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, where ministries are coming together and making sure that services are available in schools for our kids. Those resources—programs and services—are rolling out across the province right now, and they will be there for students when they look to have that support.

1110

Every single one of us in this room is a parent, a grandparent, or has loved ones in our lives. I hope that on this file we will see the Legislature come together, because as a mom myself, I can't imagine the pain that parents are going through when they lose a child to this horrific situation. But this Legislature can come together, and we will make it better for kids in this province.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. This morn-

ing, I tabled a resolution that calls on you to reverse your decision on the closure of the Owen Sound, Walkerton and Sarnia jails. Your predecessor promised but then backtracked on his word to disclose the costing documents to justify the closure of the jails. He also backtracked on his promise to consult with the local communities before taking any action.

As the newly appointed minister and the one now in charge, will you do the right thing and stop the closures, pending a full public review of the decision, and begin consultations with local stakeholder groups that would be adversely affected by these closures?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, let me congratulate the member for his election. I want also to thank him for the interest that he brings forward today.

We are working to address, in the correctional services system, future capacity and infrastructure needs. We are consolidating and expanding the system, building modern, economical new jails while closing inefficient older facilities.

We recognize that change is difficult, and we have to make some tough decisions to make sure that our province remains on a strong financial footing, able to protect health care and education.

Our goal is to ensure that Ontario has an efficient and effective correctional infrastructure and the capacity to keep Ontario's communities safe, and to ensure that those in our custody are held in safe, secure and humane conditions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary? The member from Huron-Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Minister, this is not just an issue of jail closures. It's about your government ignoring rural Ontario. It's an issue of increased job losses and economic instability in rural Ontario.

Your ministry has not consulted with a single local community stakeholder group regarding the pending closure. Further to that, the Auditor General in 2008 predicted that this year there would be a shortfall of 2,000 jail beds.

You know—your ministry knows—that the Walkerton jail has been over capacity for weeks and months on end. To follow up on the correspondence I sent to you prior to today, Minister, again I respectfully ask: Will you commit today to postponing the closure of Walkerton, Owen Sound and Sarnia jails until you have completed the promised community stakeholder consultations and released the cost-benefit analysis?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, let me congratulate the member for her election.

My answer will be short: No, I will not commit to it. You know what? I heard your leader asking for us to save money, and you and your colleague are standing up and asking us to spend more money.

These jails are inefficient. The jail in Walkerton was built prior to Confederation, in 1866. Not surprisingly, this facility is no longer capable of meeting the needs of Ontario's correctional system. We are building two new,

large jails—the one in Toronto and the one in Windsor—and we will add to the capacity of beds that we need.

No, we're not going to postpone the closure of these two jails. Thank you.

## CHILD CARE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question, the member from—

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Toronto-Danforth.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Toronto-Danforth. It'll come.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I know it will come; I have no question about that. But I do have a question for the Minister of Education.

Hundreds of child care centres across Ontario are at risk of closing unless the government takes action. Ontario families need affordable and dependable child care so they can go to work each day. When will the government address the current child care crisis and ensure that families don't lose the child care that they need?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm very pleased to be responsible, yet again, for something as important as child care. Let me assure the member that we understand and have invested significantly in ensuring Ontario's youngest people get what they need.

Full-day kindergarten is the most significant transformation in our education system in a generation. We know that FDK is best for our kids and for our families, and as we invest in that historic transformation and move our all-day kindergarten students from the child care sector into kindergarten, we understand and know that we need to have transformation in the rest of the system. I have said on many occasions that I am very engaged in the conversation about what modern child care looks like in the face of all-day kindergarten.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I know and understand that we have made significant investments in child care.

Just in the city of Toronto, it's important to know, Ontario's investment in child care is up 50% since 2003, and when the federal government walked away from child care, we stepped in. So have we been at the table? Absolutely—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's very early in the session to stop giving answers. But I go back to the minister: We have day care centres, child care centres in Toronto and across Ontario that are going to close unless they get the support that you promised. They aren't seeing it. What we hear is a huge commitment to corporate tax cuts, not to families and to their children. When will this minister put children and their families first rather than corporations, and tell child care centres and families that their centres are not going to close?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** First of all, let me say that I look forward to working with all of our partners, including the city of Toronto, to continue to make Ontario's



education system, starting with our youngest learners, the very best in the world, and we have been making that progress since we have been elected.

We have provided \$12 million over five years to help non-profit child care centres renovate and better serve younger learners, and since 2003 child care funding has increased from \$532 million to \$869 million, a 63% increase across the province.

I have said this personally to the member opposite: I am willing and engaged in this conversation. I am looking for the best advice that exists, but the starting point is to recognize that we are on the pathway to investing some \$1.5 billion in full-day kindergarten, a historic transformation that will change the way our youngest learners in this province are engaged and learn in the future.

## SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

### FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question: Ottawa–Orléans.

**M. Phil McNeely:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Félicitations sur votre élection comme Président de cette Assemblée.

Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Ce mois-ci, nous célébrons le 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français, adoptée à l'unanimité le 18 novembre 1986. Comme nous le savons, cette loi a été un moment charnière de l'histoire francophone de notre province. Mes commettants reconnaissent la contribution remarquable du gouvernement McGuinty à l'avancée des francophones en Ontario depuis 2003, mais, face au contexte économique incertain, ils sont inquiets face à l'avenir.

Quelles assurances pouvez-vous apporter que le gouvernement continuera de soutenir les services en français?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Merci, monsieur le Président, et félicitations pour votre élection. Je remercie le député d'Ottawa–Orléans pour sa question et sa vigilance envers les services en français.

Je suis heureuse que la première période de questions s'adresse ici aux services en français. De ce côté-ci de la Chambre, on prend cette question au sérieux. Pour notre gouvernement, la francophonie est l'une des composantes fondamentales de l'avancement et de la prospérité économique de la province dans un Canada bilingue.

Notre bilan parle de lui-même : la création du commissaire aux services en français, l'indépendance de TFO, la définition plus inclusive de « francophone », et la Journée de la francophonie.

Grâce au leadership de notre premier ministre, Dalton McGuinty, des pas de géant ont été faits depuis 2003 et nous continuerons sur cette voie. Merci.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M. Phil McNeely:** Je vous remercie pour votre réponse et je suis heureux d'apprendre que le gouvernement continue de prendre au sérieux les services en français. Cependant, j'aimerais, au nom de mes commettants, approfondir la question et vous demander ce que nous réservent les prochaines années pour la mise en oeuvre de la Loi sur les services en français.

Quels sont les principaux défis à relever et qui toucheront mes commettants francophones?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** La réponse tient en deux mots : consolidation et promotion.

Tout d'abord, notre priorité est la mise en oeuvre du nouveau règlement sur la Prestation des services en français par un tiers pour le compte du gouvernement qui vient d'entrer en vigueur le 1<sup>er</sup> juillet dernier.

Ensuite, en ce qui concerne la promotion, le gouvernement travaille déjà aux deux célébrations du 400<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la présence française en Ontario, qui sera souligné en 2015.

Il y aura aussi beaucoup d'occasions de mieux faire connaître la Loi sur les services en français dans les prochaines années.

And I invite all the members of this assembly to join me at 4:30 today for a reception in the dining room to mark the 25th anniversary of the French Language Services Act and to celebrate together Ontario's francophonie and its achievements.

## POWER PLANT

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy.

Minister, you went ahead with the Mississauga power plant despite the community's strong objections. Then, with 12 days left in the election campaign, you announced you were cancelling the plant. But for 60 days construction has continued, costing Ontario families more and more with each passing day.

Minister, will you now come clean on the cost of your Mississauga power plant and table the letter sent by the OPA to Eastern Power?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Thank you, Speaker. Congratulations on your election. I congratulate my colleague on his election, and I look forward to working with the member from Nipissing on this and so many other issues.

We made a clear and specific commitment to the residents of Mississauga and Etobicoke that there would not be a gas generating facility on that site—a commitment that was repeated, I understand, by the Leader of the Opposition just the day after.

I am very pleased that the Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield South have reached an agreement that there will not be a gas generating facility on that site. Their discussions continue, and I look forward to further information about the location of the gas generating facility in the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, my supplementary to the minister is simple: Where will you move the gas plant, and will you listen to members of the public this time so we don't have another Oakville- or Mississauga-sized bill to add to our already bloated deficit?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** When we committed that there would be no gas plant on the site, we were listening to the residents of Mississauga and Etobicoke. We have also heard that the guidelines for siting gas generating facilities, which have been successful in siting seven already, may require some additional improvement and strengthening. We're going to take that information.

We're looking at what other jurisdictions do; we're getting the best advice so we can deliver the power residents need and businesses need where they need it, when they need it, and have sites that will meet with general approval.

I look forward to speaking with my colleague more about that in the future.

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. The province doled out over \$30 million to Navistar to keep that truck factory in Ontario, but that company turned its back on its workers—and at one time, that company employed 2,000 workers—and shipped their jobs south.

Surely, by now, the province has finished its review of that contract. What I want to know from the Premier is, how much money does this province expect to recoup from Navistar for that contract?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations to you again on your accession to the Chair.

I'm pleased to respond to the leader of the third party's question. It is very, very important, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to work with businesses in all sectors across our economy, including the auto sector. I look to the leader of the third party for her support as we continue to make important investments in companies, innovative companies that are helping to ensure that Ontario's auto sector continues to lead North America.

This is critical to jobs across Ontario. This is a critical sector to our economy. We'll continue to ensure that, as we make these investments, we make them wisely. We'll continue to ensure, as we work with these companies, that we do it in a way to maximize job creation to ensure that we continue to build a strong economy.

That's what we're about on this side of the House. That's what we talked about—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, two years ago the government promised to review the contract with Navistar that left workers high and dry. A review was promised again in August of this year and, lo and behold, a review was yet again promised during the election cam-

paign. Again and again, they have promised to review this contract and tell the people how much we are going to be able to recoup from that contract.

I am asking the minister, why are we here today and he is still not able to give us an exact amount of how much we're going to be able to recoup from a contract that sent all the jobs somewhere else?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, our focus in the auto sector is going to continue to ensure that we build the best auto sector in all of North America. That's where we're at. We've just been through one of the toughest times that we've seen in this province when it comes to the economy, and still, our auto sector leads North America. That's where our focus is going to be.

Just recently, Toyota announced that they're going to be producing the RAV4 here, the new electric vehicle. That's where our investments are; that's where our focus is: building the jobs of the future, building the next generation of jobs, helping our auto sector here adjust to the new economy, making sure that we modernize, making sure that we increase productivity here in this province.

That's where our focus is. I invite the leader of the third party to join us in building up our economy rather than trying to tear it down day after day.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Speaker, my sincere congratulations on your election as well.

I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. A company named Highland Companies has acquired about 3,000 hectares of land in the Melancthon and Mulmur townships in Dufferin county, and it's for the purpose of building a very large limestone quarry. The project would be one of the largest in North America.

Now, in dealing with a project of this magnitude, Speaker, it's critical that we consult with both the municipality and constituents about impacts. I understand that many residents have voiced their concerns about the impacts to ground water and surface water, and the loss of agricultural land due to the large scale of this operation.

Speaker, through you, would the Minister of the Environment please share with the House what steps the ministry is taking to ensure that it addresses any and all potential impacts of this project?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Excellent question, I have to say, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, this government feels that it's critical to manage the province's resources in a way that is protective of our water supplies, agricultural lands and the need for aggregate.

In reviewing the company's application for a quarry approval, it was concluded that more work needs to be done to demonstrate that the proposed project would be protective of the surrounding environment. In order to ensure environmental impacts of the proposed project are assessed in a comprehensive manner, in full consultation with the public, our government designated the project to be scrutinized under the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act.



1130

The Highland quarry is currently being put through an individual environmental assessment that will make sure all impacts and concerns receive the highest level of scrutiny and study while providing full opportunities for public and stakeholder comments. We've listened to the many concerns that have been expressed by the public—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, Speaker. Again, my supplementary is for the minister.

I'd like to thank the minister for that answer. I know that residents and people throughout Ontario will be pleased to know that a full environmental assessment is being undertaken for this particularly large project. Large-scale projects such as this quarry obviously garner a lot of public interest, and that interest is with respect to potential environmental and health impacts. I'm pleased to see we've got the planning tools in place, such as environmental assessments, to ensure sound environmental decision-making and public consultation.

Would the Minister of the Environment also explain to the House some recent changes to the act and some improvements to the environmental planning process that have taken place?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member may know that our government is committed to protecting the environment by considering the benefits of projects alongside the possible impacts to our environment. Ontario's Environmental Assessment program promotes good environmental planning by determining the benefits and potential effects of projects before they're implemented.

Environmental assessment promotes an effective decision-making process that includes ensuring that public concerns are heard. When planning is well done—and it will be—it means that major infrastructure projects can be developed while still protecting the environment. To enable the development of infrastructure initiatives, renewable energy waste and transit sectors, the ministry has implemented more efficient approval processes while still ensuring that environmental health and safety matters are appropriately assessed.

## SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, when you brought in your College of Trades bill we told you it was a bad plan but you didn't listen. When you started packing the college with your Working Families cronies, we sounded the alarm bell but you didn't stop.

Now the coalition of Ontario construction employers, some of the largest trade associations in Ontario, has come out and said that your College of Trades will raise taxes and kill jobs. They said that the college "will advance an agenda of broad-based ... certification for Ontario's ... trades, which will stifle job creation at a time when our province needs more jobs, not less."

Minister, will you put the brakes on your College of Trades debacle before it cripples our construction employers in Ontario?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank the member, Mr. Speaker, for the question.

It's fascinating to me that in their time in power they couldn't even generate 15,000 apprenticeships in a year—not even 15,000. Before we've even launched the College of Trades, we have this year already achieved 28,000 of 120,000.

Now, if you do the math, we know that by 2025 we need 362,000 jobs. Their programs don't even get us halfway there. Our programs exceed that. Your record was an unmitigated disaster in government.

I met with the College of Trades and I saw business and labour and universities and colleges working together, which you divided when you were in government. We're very proud to have brought business and college together, because we think we can improve on a record that's already better than the opposition party's in power.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** He should be answering to the House here, not just these tweets that are coming out of the minister.

Minister, you can't really think that you know the construction industry better than the eight largest employer associations. They're telling you in black and white that what you're about to do is going to kill jobs with your poorly-thought-out College of Trades. Even the members of the college know that something is wrong when they've had to push back the appointment schedules three different times.

Ontario's economy is hanging by a thread and you're giving Pat Dillon and the College of Trades a pair of scissors.

Why won't you admit that the College of Trades is off the rails? Will you stop your politics of anger, envy and division?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, this is becoming laughable. The member was concerned about my tweets. He should have looked at some of the election literature—that I thought was pretty offensive—that was circulated and that made my tweets look like absolutely nothing. No one there has apologized for that. Maybe he would apologize at his next chance.

When you had a worse record, when you had a record in government that was half our current record—we're already producing twice as many apprenticeships, 120,000. Unlike you, who divide labour and business and wanted to create a culture war in society, we've got a group of business leaders, academics and labour leaders sitting down to improve a record that's already twice what your record is. Any time you want to debate that, my dear friend, I will debate that here, anywhere, any time.

## ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question. The member for Welland.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Kenora—Rainy River. To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: Last week, we heard that another First Nation community, KI First Nation, walked away from talks with the province after the Minister of Northern Development and Mines couldn't reassure the community that it would hold back a gold mining company from exploring on their lands until full consultation had taken place. Once again, this points to the Ontario government's shortcoming to set clear guidelines for consultation with regard to exploration on traditional lands.

When will this government consult with First Nations as equal partners?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to congratulate the member on her election. I look forward to working with her. And to the Speaker, congratulations.

First of all, I want to say that we are the government that established a stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. We are the government that has engaged in government-to-government conversations. We are the government that has established a working relationship with First Nations around the province. My general response to the member—and I will speak to the specifics—is that we remain committed to a respectful, on-going discussion with the aboriginal people of this province, one that we began when we were elected in 2003, and we will continue to this day.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: For the record, it was the member from Kenora—Rainy River, not the member from Welland.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You stole my thunder because I had some corrections to make at the end of the wrap-up, so I will be making those. Thank you very much.

### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This is just to clarify the record. On my question earlier, I referred to balanced budgets and the record of the member from Windsor—Tecumseh as finance minister. The fact of the matter is, in his tenure as finance minister, he has never balanced a budget; that's four budgets.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There was half a point of order in that, in that the members are allowed to correct their record but not to restate something else. I appreciate your not doing that.

### USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** At this time, I would like to thank you all for my very first question period. For the sake of transparency, I admit there were a couple of fumbles. Doing so, I do want to point out very clearly that when the moment comes for stopping the clock, I will do so at the benefit of the House. I did steal some time, and those kinds of things will happen from

time to time, so I beg your indulgence for a short time. After that, beat me up all you want.

I would also say that the trend I spoke of is one of heckling. I believe that if you were to provide each other with the amount of time to give the question and give the answer, there are other times in which you can make those poignant pieces of information available also in the House. Let's get through question period with as much dignity to each other as possible. And, please, one last comment: Let's not make it personal. Thank you.

This House stands recessed until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** It is my great pleasure today to introduce guests who are in our members' gallery. These people are raw milk producers and consumers from across Ontario who have had a public rally today in front of the main Legislative Building. They are also part of a nationwide rally that happened today in cities across Canada. Welcome, friends.

Their names are Ed and Martha Embury—would you stand, please?—Bob and Sue Clinton, Richard Chomko, Lisa Lundgard, Pam Killeen and Michael Schmidt.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In the members' gallery east: the honourable Bill Wrye and his wife Gay. Bill served in the David Peterson government and gave me my first job at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome to the former member.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### JAMIE HUBLEY

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** A sweet 16 is something every parent wants their child to celebrate. It's an important milestone: perhaps teaching them to drive or simply seeing them grow older. My friend Allan Hubley and his wife, Wendy, don't have that opportunity. Their beautiful boy Jamie would have turned 16 today.

Jamie had been bullied because he was a figure skater. He was bullied because of his sexuality. He was bullied because he was different. A gifted singer and skater, Jamie was tormented not only by his bullies but also by teenage mental illness. For those who have mental illness, coping with bullying sometimes means they can't see a better day, so it's up to us in this assembly to find a better way.

The member for Ottawa Centre and I are committed to finding the gaps in services in our community. We're going to highlight what our service providers do best, and we're going to ensure that Ottawa has a suicide prevention plan, because one teenage suicide—or one suicide—is one too many. Because kids in a dark place and parents with innumerable questions expect us to work together to



prevent suicide, whether we are right or left, gay or straight; regardless of our culture, our religion or our economic circumstances. Because kids, after all, are just that: They're kids, and they deserve, Mr. Speaker, a sweet 16.

Thank you very much, and happy birthday, Jamie.

### ARTS RICHMOND HILL

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** In my role as the MPP for the riding of Richmond Hill, it's my privilege to have the opportunity to become familiar with Arts Richmond Hill, a not-for-profit registered charity and volunteer organization which is providing extraordinary services to my community. I was pleased this weekend to attend the 16th annual Arts Richmond Hill Music Festival. The festival brought together local young talents in piano, strings, woodwinds and vocals who all competed for scholarships. Winners will be featured at Arts Richmond Hill's winners' gala concert on January 15, 2012.

I'm proud and delighted to see our youth committed to fostering the arts and culture through participating in such festivals and competitions. These local festivals wouldn't be possible if not for the dedicated volunteers at Arts Richmond Hill.

Arts Richmond Hill is committed to enhancing arts and culture in the town of Richmond Hill through an entrepreneurial approach to programs, services and facilities provision. Founded in 1979, Arts Richmond Hill is a community-based arts council whose mandate is the advancement of arts and culture through promotion, awareness and education.

I commend Arts Richmond Hill, in particular its board of directors and President Dr. Emmanuel Abara, for their continued effort to promote the various arts and cultural opportunities available to the community in Richmond Hill.

### ELECTIONS ONTARIO

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election as Speaker.

I rise to speak today about an issue that concerns all of us here in this Legislature. I'm referring to the most fundamental aspect of our democratic system: the right of people to cast their ballot.

I'm asking my fellow MPPs to join me in demanding that Elections Ontario clean up its disgraceful voters list. We were all disappointed with the historically low voter turnout on October 6, when fewer than half of Ontarians voted.

I believe that one of the main reasons is their frustration of being left off the voters' list entirely or the incorrect information they were given about where to vote. I'm sure everyone in this Legislature heard horror stories from people at the doorstep during the campaign.

I had people tell me they had lived at the same location for decades and dutifully voted in every election,

only to discover they had suddenly vanished from the list. Others were shocked to find several names listed on a home they'd lived in for generations—except their own. Many were so offended by this omission, which they took as a personal insult, that they refused to vote in protest.

I also recall a couple in Portland, in my own riding, who could literally throw a stone and hit the side of the polling station they'd voted at for years, yet their voters' card sent them to a polling station 30 minutes away. They took the time to get it fixed, but I'm sure many others said, "Why bother?"

I call on Elections Ontario to look into why the voters' list is such a mess and fix it before more Ontarians become disenfranchised.

### ABORIGINAL HOUSING

#### LOGEMENT DES AUTOCHTONES

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Speaker, I rise in the House today not with any great rejoicing, because unfortunately we have yet another situation in a First Nations community; in this case, in Attawapiskat, where we have essentially a crisis going on. The community and Mushkegowuk Council have declared a state of emergency when it comes to the living conditions that people have to live in on that reserve.

It is 30 below zero in Attawapiskat, and there are currently five families living in tents—on wooden floors in a tent. We have 17 families living in sheds in backyards. I'm not talking about a house; I'm talking about your utility shed. We have 47 families living in what essentially is a contractor's trailer that has no fire suppression, that has no smoke detection, that has no fire detection, and they chain the doors at night. If anything were to happen as far as a fire, it would be a tragedy.

The community has declared a state of emergency, and Emergency Measures Ontario thankfully has agreed that there is a state of emergency. I have given to both the minister and the Premier today a letter from my office asking them to take action so that Emergency Measures Ontario can fly to the community in order to assess the situation so that we can make sure that Ontario's citizens are made safe.

Monsieur le Président, c'est important. On a besoin de s'assurer que tous les citoyens de cette province, incluant ceux des Premières Nations, sont sécurés quand ça vient à où ils demeurent. Je demande au gouvernement de travailler avec les néo-démocrates et la communauté pour s'assurer que tous les citoyens de l'Ontario, incluant les citoyens d'Attawapiskat, sont sécurés. Merci, monsieur le Président.

1510

### FLU IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** The mornings are colder, the sun sets earlier, the windows are closed, and germs and viruses come home and stay inside. Ontarians need a

reminder that the 2011 flu shot is available. The flu shot is effective, it's free, it works. It prevents the flu by stimulating your immune system to build antibodies against this year's flu viruses.

You can get the flu shot through your doctor, your local health unit and, in many cases, your pharmacy or employer, wherever you live in Ontario.

Western Mississauga residents of Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville can receive their free flu shot at the Meadowvale Town Centre on Wednesday, November 30, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or at Streetsville Secondary School on Wednesday, December 7, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more dates and locations, Mississauga and Brampton residents can call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700.

You need a flu shot this year and every year. Flu strains change every year. If you got a flu shot last year, you may not be fully protected against this year's flu virus. Don't forget to have the entire family get a free flu shot this year and every year.

And, Speaker, congratulations on your election. I take personal pride in your ascent to the throne as Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** It is entirely possible that the McGuinty Liberals may think the GTA West Corridor study is a good idea. But for many of the residents of the town of Halton Hills, the study's alternative 4-3 is a road to nowhere.

For more than a year the council of the town of Halton Hills has been raising objections to alternative 4-3, which is a proposed new highway corridor connecting the 401 to the 400. The region of Halton council has expressed solidarity with town council, as have I.

Local residents maintain that this new highway, if it were to be built, would have a severe impact on our local environment, heritage and historical sites, good-quality farmland, and the larger sense of community in the town of Halton Hills, because it would cut off one portion of the town from the other. It would also have a severe impact on property values.

Considering the perilous state of the province's finances after eight years of uncontrolled spending, the affordability of proposed projects like this one must be questioned. The town has also suggested constructive alternatives, like widening of the 401, which would undoubtedly be less expensive and thus more practical in today's strained fiscal environment.

We have other more urgent transportation priorities in Wellington-Halton Hills, and in the spirit of co-operation in this minority Parliament, I'd be delighted to work with the Minister of Transportation on them, if he's willing to do so.

#### TRINITY UNITED CHURCH

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to be in the House today as the MPP repre-

senting the residents in my constituency of London-Fanshawe.

Today, I would like to talk about what is happening in my community. There's a church on Hale Street, Trinity United. Rev. Paul Browning has been the minister of Trinity United for seven years. Reverend Browning, along with the members, is committed to the community's development.

Some examples of the wonderful work they have done are: donate space for fundraising events with the proceeds going to the homeless; offer monthly free hospitality meals; hold trivia nights; and run a successful community environment youth program fondly known as the Green Team—more than 65 youths, parents and supporters are involved. Although it started out as a youth program, it has fast become a multi-generational program.

Just recently, I attended a dance in Trinity church's basement, with a live band playing 1950s and 1960s music. Volunteers donated delicious home-baked goods. A great time was had by all.

Trinity and its members are reaching out to all people in the community, and they are encouraging them to come out to meet their neighbours, socialize, enjoy the entertainment, watch a play or enjoy a great meal.

I want to thank Trinity, their volunteers, and the many other churches, community groups and organizations that continue to foster community involvement and make a difference in our neighbourhoods.

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Mr. Speaker, congratulations on assuming the position of Speaker.

I rise today to share a few words about Remembrance Day. Every November 11, Canadians from coast to coast join together to commemorate the men and women who have sacrificed their lives for our country. We pay tribute to the selfless contributions of our veterans and recognize members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are currently putting their lives on the line. We honour those heroes, for it is because of them that we live in a freer, more secure and more prosperous Canada.

This past Remembrance Day, I had the honour of laying a wreath on behalf of the province of Ontario at the Scarborough cenotaph. The ceremony, hosted by the Scarborough zone of the Royal Canadian Legion, served as a sombre reminder and a proud reflection of the contributions that residents of Scarborough Southwest have made throughout Canadian history.

These efforts must be acknowledged. For example, brothers Sergeant Don Lee and Captain Ben Lee, who have both served in Afghanistan, have dedicated their lives to protecting our rights and freedoms. They've also helped to train our brave men and women, many of whom have come from Scarborough.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Don and Ben Lee for their service, and to the countless other brave Canadians who have faced danger



to ensure we live in a better world. Let us continue to remember their immense contributions, sacrifices, and the legacy of their efforts.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Small business in my riding of Durham, including farmers and home-based entrepreneurs, are challenged at every turn by higher costs and demands by the McGuinty government. The January 1 increase in WSIB premiums, development charges, rising property tax, the HST, and rising energy costs are just a few examples. There is no help for business from the Ontario government, and it was verified yesterday in the throne speech. Agriculture was not even mentioned in the recent throne speech, and business was all but ignored.

I can find no commitment to reducing red tape that costs the Ontario economy \$11 billion a year. There's no commitment to give Ontario's business community a guaranteed voice whenever government discusses taxes and spending that will impact Ontario's economy. Ontario businesses are not treated as respected partners but as the McGuinty government's personal ATM machines. How shameful.

Just one of the initiatives of the official opposition and our leader, Tim Hudak, is reform in the apprenticeship program that would create 200,000 jobs for young people.

I remain concerned about jobs and the economy in Ontario; it seems the Premier does not. I urge this House to support the real initiatives by Tim Hudak and the opposition to create an economy and welcome small business in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do have some business. Number one, as my learning curve continues during members' statements, I will inform the House that I will try to be lenient and understanding for very specific statements that are felt in a non-partisan way, to ensure that the message is loud and clear. I will also be very quick to stand when other statements are not of that nature.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Oraziotti assumes ballot item number 5, Mr. Balkissoon assumes ballot item number 77, Mr. Dickson assumes ballot item number 9, Mr. Bailey assumes ballot item number 4 and Mr. McNaughton assumes ballot item number 60.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I don't have a problem in switching orders of precedence, but I've not seen that in writing. It has not been given to me and I did not give consent. I want to see it first.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is not required to receive permission; the parties decide amongst them-

selves the changing of their ballots, and if that takes place, it is reported to the House that that has happened. Thank you.

1520

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en œuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Ministerial statements.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Introduction of bills: the member for—

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election as Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will do it properly again. The member from Thornhill.

### YORK REGION TRANSIT LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL AU SEIN DES SERVICES DE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN DE LA RÉGION DE YORK

Mr. Shurman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York / *Projet de loi 3, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des entreprises qui fournissent des services de transport en commun dans la municipalité régionale de York.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I request respectfully that the House consider this bill for second reading and third reading concurrently, due to the onerous and grave nature of what's going on in York region. I'd like unanimous consent for that, should the bill pass second reading.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is there unanimous consent that the bill carry to a third?

I heard a no.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you very much, Speaker. The bill is entitled An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York. Because nobody else is acting, myself and my two colleagues the member from York–Simcoe and the member from Newmarket–Aurora decided that we'd better take it upon ourselves.

I hate to be using one year's worth of private members' time to debate a bill like this, but unfortunately it's called for.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. At this point, I would normally go on to other bills to be introduced, but I would also like to remind the members that when we do present a short statement about the bill, you're talking about the content of the bill, and it remains so.

#### RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT (HST REBATE FOR HOME HEATING), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL (REMBOURSEMENT DE LA TVH POUR LE CHAUFFAGE DOMESTIQUE)

Mr. Mantha moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide for a rebate of the Ontario portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax in respect of certain home heating costs / *Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail pour prévoir un remboursement de la composante ontarienne de la taxe de vente harmonisée à l'égard de certains frais de chauffage domestique.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I'd like to congratulate you, on behalf of the residents of Algoma–Manitoulin, on your appointment to the Chair.

The bill amends the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide for a rebate in respect of the Ontario portion of the harmonized sales tax for the supply of energy sources used for home heating, equipment used for home heating and services related to home heating. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is given the authority to make regulations prescribing the energy sources, equipment and services in respect of which the rebate applies.

The bill provides that this bill is available only if the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement between Ontario and Canada is amended accordingly.

#### WIRELESS PHONE, SMART PHONE AND DATA SERVICE TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE DES SERVICES DE TÉLÉPHONE MOBILE, DE TÉLÉPHONE INTELLIGENT ET DE TRANSMISSION DE DONNÉES

Mr. Oraziotti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to provide transparency and protection for consumers of wireless telephone services, smart phone services and data services in Ontario / *Projet de loi 5, Loi prévoyant la transparence des services de téléphone mobile, de téléphone intelligent et de transmission de données et la protection des consommateurs de ces services en Ontario.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election.

The Wireless Phone, Smart Phone and Data Service Transparency Act, 2011, would reduce costs to consumers; put an end to unfair practices by wireless service providers by requiring thorough disclosure of all mandatory and optional services included in the performance agreement, including the disclosure of hidden fees; and would place limits on excessive contract termination fees. The legislation proposes the most far-reaching protection in Canada for consumers of wireless services.

#### IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

Mr. Dickson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms / *Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu relativement à la vente de fausses armes à feu.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

1530

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill is to highlight the dangers posed by imitation firearms to both youth and police officers. It is used as a means of intimidation by criminals and young offenders and used largely in armed robberies. And so be it.



## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. John Milloy:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following change be made to the order of precedence for private members' public business: Mr. Shurman and Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, exchange places such that Mr. Shurman assumes ballot item 2 and Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, assumes ballot item 20; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirements for notice for ballot items 1 through 6, inclusive, be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The House is familiar with the motion. All in favour? Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Are there any further motions? No further motions.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

#### PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present the 2011 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review.

I do so at a time when the global economy is uncertain.

In some cases, that uncertainty comes from real, pressing challenges facing our trading partners.

In Europe, the situation remains volatile, which, for Ontario's strong financial sector, remains a concern.

In Japan, the economic impacts of the tragic tsunami continue to be dire, which, for Ontario's manufacturing sector, has meant disruptions to the supply chain.

And slower growth in the United States, our largest trading partner, affects Ontario's growth as well.

Global economic uncertainty is exacerbated by market volatility that affects people's savings on a daily basis.

As a result, people are anxious. Our job as a Legislature is to speak to that anxiousness.

Voilà pourquoi, monsieur le Président, l'économie de l'Ontario et la création d'emplois seront la priorité de notre gouvernement.

Which is why, Mr. Speaker, our government's priority will be Ontario's economy and job creation.

We have made some great progress together with Ontarians in building the foundations of a strong economy.

We built better schools, together.

As a result, we have one of the best-educated workforces in the world.

Now we have to work together to make sure that more of those workers find the good, high-paying jobs that they have earned.

Sir, we have built a better health care system, together.

As a result, wait times are down and we have more doctors and nurses.

Now we need to use that health care advantage to attract more investment.

We have reformed our tax system, together.

As a result, Ontario is one of the most competitive places in the world for new business investment.

Now we are redoubling our efforts to leverage that advantage.

Mr. Speaker, the times require a serious plan, steady leadership and all of us here in this House and across the province working together.

Sir, over the last eight months, private sector economists have lowered their projections for Ontario's economic growth by about 25% for this year and for next year.

At the time of the 2011 budget, the average private sector forecast was real GDP growth of 2.6%, which has declined to 2.0%.

To put that in perspective, a 0.6% drop is equal to hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for the province.

Our economy is still growing, but neither as quickly as earlier forecasts predicted nor as quickly as, I'm sure, anyone in the House would like.

Since our budget was based on those earlier predictions, we will be facing additional pressure as we protect the gains we have made in our schools and hospitals as we've been reducing the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of these lower forecasts, we remain committed to meeting the targets in our balanced budget plan.

And more recently, the Premier has laid out the principles our government will follow as we go back to a balanced budget.

We will protect health care and education as the most important public services.

Any reforms we undertake will not compromise those services. Any reforms will not compromise health or the education of our children.

We will reject across-the-board reductions because that would mean deep cuts to health and education.

Toute réforme adoptée doit accroître la valeur de chaque dollar dépensé grâce à des gains d'efficacité et de productivité.

Any reforms that we adopt must lead to better value for money through improved efficiencies and greater productivity.

We will not consider tax increases or privatized public health care.

Finally, we will not pursue austerity measures that harm the economy.

Mr. Speaker, by adhering to these principles, we will continue to provide Ontarians with the public services they depend upon, deliver the reforms necessary to meet our goals and remain on the path to a balanced budget, as we set out in our 2010 budget.

Our greatest opportunity for reform and renewal will be found in health care.

With health care consuming an ever-increasing part of the budget and with the growing pressures created by our aging population, many Ontarians fear for the future of their health care.

Our government will tackle this challenge. We will work to guarantee a strong health care system—not only for ourselves but for our children and our grandchildren.

Speaker, as we return Ontario's budget to balance and lead our province through this time of global uncertainty, we will do so with the same energy and fervour that characterized our previous efforts.

In 2008, the global economy fell into one of the deepest recessions in generations.

Our government, like many others, invested heavily in stimulus, building roads, bridges and other important infrastructure.

These investments reduced the impact of the recession on our families by protecting and creating jobs.

Nous faisons maintenant face à un nouveau défi, celui d'offrir des services publics de calibre mondial et de retrouver l'équilibre budgétaire lorsque l'économie ralentit.

Now we have a new challenge: We must provide world-class public services and return to a balanced budget in a time of slow global economic growth.

So we have taken action once again.

We have saved money through generic drug reforms and reduced the number of government agencies, and we are reducing the size of the public service.

In the 2011 budget, we announced the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services, chaired by economist Don Drummond.

In a few weeks, we will receive the commission's recommendations on ways to reform those public services.

Mr. Drummond's report will help launch a thoughtful conversation and debate on the best ways to meet Ontario's goals of eliminating the deficit while protecting schools and hospitals.

A conversation about meaningful reform to the way government delivers services to taxpayers is a more meaningful debate than simply calling for deep, arbitrary, across-the-board cuts.

Such cuts do not deliver long-term results in lowering growth rates and spending.

They merely cause delays, passing on decisions and responsibilities to future governments and future generations.

1540

And they would unravel the progress Ontarians have made in improving our schools and hospitals.

A far more demanding—and far more rewarding—approach is to examine everything that government does, piece by piece, to find creative, efficient and effective ways to deliver public services.

A smarter, more strategic approach is to look at what sort of decisions we must make today to produce more value for taxpayers while still delivering the best results for Ontario families.

Facing lower forecasts for economic growth, Ontario will meet the challenge by building on its track record of reforming the way government works.

We know that Mr. Drummond's preliminary advice is to hold growth in program spending to 1% per year.

That is something we will be consulting Ontarians and the Legislature about when the commission's report is finalized.

We also know that any new spending or unforeseen expenditures must come from savings realized elsewhere.

Governments of all political stripes over the last generation in Ontario have accumulated debt.

As all Ontarians know, continuing to borrow without curbing spending is simply not sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this fall, all the political parties represented in this Legislature presented the same timeline to eliminate the deficit.

All three parties projected very low rates of growth in program spending.

So I'm pleased to announce that this past year, the rate of spending growth has been cut almost in half.

And, in keeping with the reduced deficit targets laid out in our 2010 budget, we are projecting a deficit of \$16 billion for this fiscal year.

In fact, this puts us ahead of the budget forecast despite the global economic uncertainty and volatility.

However, we all know there is more work ahead of us.

And our government will continue—unlike some governments—to meet its targets.

As we continue to move Ontario forward, Mr. Speaker, we'll give priority to the parts of our plan that both address the needs of Ontario families and strengthen our economy.

We will propose a healthy homes renovation tax credit.

The credit would help seniors stay in their homes longer, support over 10,000 jobs and about \$800 million in economic activity and benefit taxpayers by relieving pressures on long-term-care costs.

Given the need to balance new spending aimed at helping families with the need to lower spending growth, the cost of this program would be offset by savings in other areas which I will identify.

Mr. Speaker, this is our reality.

Les nouvelles politiques envisagées par le gouvernement et l'Assemblée législative ne doivent pas faire obstacle à l'élimination du déficit.



New policies considered by this government and by this Legislature must not stand in the way of eliminating the deficit.

Ontarians have always risen to the challenges that confront us.

When our government was confronted with failing public services and an electricity system unequal to the task of driving economic growth, we responded.

When the global economy tumbled into one of the worst recessions in generations, we responded.

When Ontario's tax system needed reform to increase investment and create jobs, we responded.

And while the challenges facing us today are new, how we choose to face them is not.

We will respond as Ontarians have always responded.

With determination.

With hard work.

And by working together.

Our government will be prudent in our planning and relentless in our reforms and put good ideas ahead of ideology.

We will work with this House, Mr. Speaker, and where there are ideas that are consistent with the principles we have laid out and that serve to strengthen Ontario's economy, we will gladly adopt them.

That is what Ontarians expect of us. They expect a mature debate, focusing on serious issues. We have the chance to do it together, working together, and we are committed to that; to move forward together and build on the tremendous accomplishments we have already achieved together.

We will stand with Ontarians.

We are inspired by Ontarians.

And our priorities are, and will remain, the priorities of all Ontarians: a great quality of life for our families, the security and confidence that comes with a good job, and a bright future for our children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Response?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it is baffling. Only the McGuinty Liberals would give a standing ovation to putting Ontario another \$16 billion in debt. What Ontario families expect is a serious plan for serious times, and all we got today in the economic statement, all we got in the throne speech, was an empty, vacuous plan devoid of new ideas, devoid of bold leadership. We will bring those new ideas, we will bring that bold leadership, and we will fight each and every day to restore fiscal sanity to the province of Ontario.

To hear the finance minister explain it, the ballooning deficit is not his government's fault. No, it's troubles in Europe. He'll blame it on the States; he'll blame it on Japan; he'll blame it on Ottawa. But they never look at themselves. And one thing I will say to the Premier and to his finance minister, one thing about your excuses: They certainly are well travelled. But you need to start looking at yourself in the mirror. While governments

across the globe are taking bold action to rein in spending, to reduce their debt, we have yet to see a single new idea from the McGuinty government to do so. They blame everyone else but themselves, and he still doesn't want to take responsibility for the bad decisions that got us here or even admit that he has no plan to get us out of the mess. But the proof is there in black and white.

Speaker, it was this McGuinty government that increased program spending by an unsustainable 7% a year, each and every year, miles ahead of economic growth. It was this McGuinty government's out-of-control spending that has single-handedly doubled Ontario's debt. And it was this McGuinty government that saw Ontario's credit rating downgraded not once but twice, and he confirms today that the deficit is on the rise in the province of Ontario again.

Last year, Ontario ran a \$14-billion deficit, and who knew that that would actually be good news by comparison, because this year, they announced that Ontario is running a \$16-billion deficit. Fourteen billion dollars last year, \$16 billion this year: If you ever needed a more obvious sign that this government is headed in the wrong direction, there it is right there, in black and white.

Speaker, unlike our colleagues across the aisle, the Ontario PCs are rooted in the understanding that there is a difference between "nice to have" and "must have"; that balanced budgets should be the goal of every government; and that governments can no longer continue to spend money that they don't have.

**1550**

The finance minister today chooses to put off those tough decisions to another day. He announces that a plan will come forward to consult and then maybe find some decisions to be made at some time down the road. Sir, that is no longer good enough. Families want action now. They want leadership today.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario PCs are prepared to take action to address Ontario's growing debt crisis. We've called for solutions like fixing a broken arbitration system; taking \$5.5 billion out of spending by a full program review and ending one-time funding; and yes, later today, calling for a mandatory legislative pay freeze, unlike the Premier's voluntary wage freeze that has been a dismal failure, which will bring in \$2 billion in savings.

Ontario families sent us to Queen's Park with a very clear message: It's time to reduce the size and cost of government. The Premier may ignore that. He may ignore that message, but we cannot; we will not. We will be direct in our proposals, we will be resolute in our beliefs and we will be determined in our actions. And if this Premier and his cabinet are not up to completing the task, the Ontario PCs can and the Ontario PCs will.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the Minister of Finance as he discussed and talked to us about one tough budget. And it is tough. It's tough on the people of this province.

We, in the New Democratic Party, believe that the people who live in this province should always come first. And when they have been polled, the people of this

province tell us—60% of them have said—that in this past year they have seen a deterioration in their living conditions. Sixty per cent of them tell us that they live paycheque to paycheque, and if they ever lost their jobs or if they ever lost the means of income for their family, they would find themselves in absolutely dire straits. They also tell us that they have the highest anxiety about the economy of any place in Canada. The highest anxiety is here in Ontario.

We know that household debt is rising, and we know that economic insecurity abounds in literally every household across all of Ontario. And we know that if those continue, we're not going to see prosperity; we're going to see stagnation. We know that when this happened in the United States, the result was stagnation. People were afraid; they were afraid of losing their jobs. They walked away from their mortgages, they walked away from their debts, and the country went into a tailspin. We are facing the same here.

We know that this government is prepared to give away \$600 million in tax cuts that will produce virtually nothing; \$600 million to the richest corporations. We've seen, over the last number of years, what's happened when that money was given to them. Layoffs actually increased. Jobs were not created; layoffs increased. Corporations took that money, just like they did in Hamilton, and they walked away and took the jobs south with them.

We also know, following this same prescription that the finance minister has laid out today—and with help, I think, from the Harper government—that two years from now, another \$1 billion will be given to corporations so that they can write off their expenses. Expenses like meals and hockey games and entertainment will become tax-free. Would that ordinary people losing their jobs could see such largesse from this government.

The government hired an expert, and I quote what their very own expert had to say: "What ... need(s) to unfold in Ontario is in many cases more severe than what governments did in the 1990s." That's what this government is going to do.

For all that the Liberals on the other side talk about the bad days of the Harris government, you are going to do more. You are going to do it with the same force and effect as they did in those days, because although you are not going to cut health care and education, the cuts that come to every other government department are going to be more severe than what happened from 1995 through 2003—much more severe.

Today, we have the lowest corporate tax rates, one of the lowest in the entire world, but at the same time we also have record high household debts, we have record unemployment in many communities across this province and we have families who are falling further and further behind with every monthly paycheque.

On the one hand, we have a government that wants to continue these corporate tax cuts so that the very rich can have lavish parties and corporate largesse and have a tax write-off to do it. On the other side, we have families

who are going to see reduced services in almost every government department and who are going to see potential closing of child care centres, and we have municipalities that are going to see debts continue to mount. This is not a statement that the government should be proud of.

We should be looking at alternatives. One of the alternatives, clearly, is to raise the revenue, and that's what governments need to look at. If we are going to provide the services, we need to raise the revenue, not just cut the services.

I ask the government to look at what is right, not just for the corporations but literally for every single person and family who live here in Ontario.

## PETITIONS

### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "Petition to Save Duntroon Central Public School and All Other Rural Schools in Clearview Township.

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas" Premier "McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to" help "keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** En l'honneur du 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français, je vais la présenter en français :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de



l'Ontario et de surveiller l'application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l'ombudsman, au commissaire à l'environnement et au commissaire à l'intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l'Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu'il relève directement de l'Assemblée législative. »

Je suis d'accord avec cette pétition et je vais demander à page Lila de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin-Caledon.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election.

My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

«Whereas we, the undersigned, are residents of Dufferin county and other adjacent counties and municipalities in Ontario;

1600

«We understand that the Highland Companies, if successful in their plans to initially develop a 2,300-acre mine to mine aggregates in Melancthon township, plan to haul aggregates from the proposed quarry in Melancthon township southward using County Road 124, Highway 89, Highway 10 and other Ontario roads and highways;

«We understand that there will be a minimum of 150 trucks loaded with aggregates per hour heading southward and a minimum of 150 empty trucks returning to the proposed quarry per hour. The initial number of trucks to be used, 300 per hour, is set out in the Highland's application.

«Regardless of which Ontario highways and roads such trucks use, there will be definite traffic problems, particularly during the winter months. Highland's initial proposal is unrealistic, inappropriate and will detrimentally impact highway safety and the operation of emergency vehicles.

«We are aware that there will be other vehicles other than trucks hauling aggregates travelling to and from the proposed quarry using Ontario roads and highways; for example, trucks carrying explosives—Highland proposes to use up to 52 tons of explosives daily—trucks carrying equipment to the proposed quarry and other vehicles travelling to and from the quarry, adding to the present volume of traffic and increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

«We respectfully submit that the consequences of improving the Highland proposal to construct a 2,300-acre mega quarry to mine aggregates in Melancthon

township will cause irreparable harm to Dufferin county and the province of Ontario; and

«Whereas our concerns include the following:

«As concerned, taxpaying citizens of Ontario, environmental issues are of paramount importance. Our concerns, including the impact on land, air, ground and surface water, plant and animal life and the effect the proposed quarry will have on the social, economic and cultural conditions affecting the lives of those in close proximity to the proposed quarry and many other citizens of Ontario in bordering counties and communities, such as Alliston, Caledon, Collingwood, Fergus, Guelph, Orangeville and Waterloo;

«As concerned, taxpaying citizens of Ontario, the proposed destruction of the finest agricultural land in Ontario is not acceptable;

«As concerned, taxpaying citizens of Ontario, our concerns are real and will not go away. Many other concerns related to the proposed quarry, such as ground- and surface-water issues, dust issues, greenhouse gas issues, blasting issues, agricultural issues, fishery issues and our environment will hopefully be dealt with by other concerned citizens of Dufferin county in Ontario, the province of Ontario, our federal government and all government agencies who will be dealing with our concerns.

«Now, therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition and request that the Ontario Ministry of the Environment order a full and complete environmental assessment of the proposed Highland mega quarry project and that its decision be submitted to both the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency until such a full and complete environmental assessment is completed.

«We strongly oppose the proposal of the Highland Companies to develop a 2,300-acre mega quarry to mine aggregates in Melancthon quarry.»

My apologies for the length, but I felt it was important to get it on the record. I support the application for an EA and sign my name.

### SERVICES DIAGNOSTIQUES

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** In anticipation of having an opportunity to read a petition, Mr. Speaker, I stand first, and I want to thank the member for Welland for lending me her glasses so I can actually read this petition.

« Attendu que l'Ontario fait de la tomographie par émission de positons »—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They're nice glasses. They're very becoming.

« Attendu que l'Ontario fait de la tomographie par émission de positons (TEP), un service de santé assuré par le régime public pour les patients atteints du cancer et de maladies cardiaques, lorsque les données cliniques indiquent que cette technique est efficace dans leur cas; et

« Attendu que d'ici octobre 2009, des TEP assurées seront effectuées à Ottawa, à London, à Toronto, à Hamilton ainsi qu'à Thunder Bay; et

« Attendu que la ville du Grand Sudbury est une plaque tournante pour la santé dans le Nord-Est, qui compte l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury et son programme régional de cancer, de même que l'École de médecine du Nord de l'Ontario;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'offrir de la TEP par le biais de l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury, donnant ainsi un accès équitable aux résidents du Nord-Est de l'Ontario. »

Comme membre de Timmins–Baie James, monsieur le Président, je supporte cette pétition.

#### LYME DISEASE

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to thank the member for Sarnia–Lambton for his advocacy. I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by all corners of Leeds–Grenville. As well, I must say there are also members from Toronto, Ottawa, Mississauga, Brampton, Markham and Kingston who have signed this. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diseases, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the US and Europe; and

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I agree with the petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Laibah.

#### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further petitions? The member from Kenora–Rainy River. No, sorry—

**Interjection:** Nickel Belt.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You're getting better, Mr. Speaker.

“Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

“Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes.”

I fully agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Samuel to bring it to the Clerk.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I have a petition in front of me for saving our jails.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario provincial government has unilaterally ordered the closing of the Owen Sound and Walkerton provincial jails” without “public input; and

“Whereas staff of both facilities will be forced to relocate from their home communities and the two rural municipalities will lose up to \$3 million each in wages spent; and

“Whereas the local aboriginal offenders will be forced away from their communities and local native resources. All offenders will be moved out of their localities, rehabilitative resources and family visitation. Intermittent sentenced offenders would have jobs placed in jeopardy as the travel to Penetanguishene would be great; and

“Whereas rural communities hard hit by recession and manufacturing job loss need these well-paying jobs in their community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That Premier McGuinty supports the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails remaining open until such time as a new regional corrections facility can be opened.”

I agree with this petition and I sign it.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I will continue what I have started in the last Parliament, which is to petition about PET scans.

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made PET scanning “a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and



"Whereas," since 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Mobarrat—I'm hoping I pronounced it right—to bring it to the Clerk.

1610

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your election.

This is a petition for, again, saving our jails.

"Whereas the Ontario provincial government has unilaterally ordered the closing of the Owen Sound and Walkerton provincial jails with no public input; and

"Whereas staff of both facilities will be forced to relocate from their home communities and the two rural municipalities will lose up to \$3 million each in wages spent there; and

"Whereas the local aboriginal offenders will be forced away from their communities and local native resources. All offenders will be moved out of their localities, rehabilitative resources and family visitation. Intermittent sentenced offenders will have jobs placed in jeopardy as the travel to Penetanguishene would be too great; and

"Whereas rural communities hard hit by recession and manufacturing job loss need these well-paying jobs in their community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier McGuinty supports the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails remaining open until such time as a new regional corrections facility can be opened."

### HYDRO DAM

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to do with Bala Falls. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government permitted the release of crown lands to enable the development of a hydro dam in the heart of Bala without discussion or proper consultation with the municipality of the township of Muskoka Lakes, the district of Muskoka or the residents and businesses who would be directly affected; and

"Whereas the community is a tourism destination which is dependent on Bala Falls as an attraction; and

"Whereas residents and business people alike are deeply concerned about the economic and environmental impact that the construction and operation of the dam will have on the community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government and in particular the Minister of Natural Resources reverse the decision to release crown lands for a hydro dam in Bala...."

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 23, 2011, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to yesterday's throne speech. I do want to say, as I did in question period today, welcome to the new members of all three caucuses as we begin the new session.

I do want to say that I am particularly proud to stand here in front of an enlarged energetic Ontario PC caucus with 16 new MPPs. I'm proud of each one of them, 16 new PC MPPs. I know the other caucuses welcome new members as well.

Serving as a member of provincial Parliament is an honour. It's exciting and incredibly rewarding, but also an extremely demanding job—particularly so given the very challenging times we find ourselves in here in the province of Ontario. It is a tremendous responsibility, and I want to wish each member here at the assembly success in their own ridings, but particularly in focusing on the two crises that hit our province, as I speak today.

Ontario is in a debt crisis, and Ontario is in a jobs crisis. These are two monumental challenges that require our immediate attention—not delayed, not kicked off down the road. They require immediate attention today to take our province on a new path, to make Ontario once again the leader in Confederation: the best place to find a good job, the kind of job you can raise a family and buy a home with; the kind of place you can depend on good-quality public services; and the kind of province that is secure in its financial footings, not plunging further and further into debt.

With yesterday's speech from the throne, Speaker, the Premier had an opportunity to take Ontario down a new path, the right path, but sadly, he failed. He had a chance to take a bit of responsibility for the role that he has played in Ontario's poor economic performance. He failed to do so. The Premier had the chance to signal to

us in the opposition, both the PCs and New Democrats, that it wasn't going to be just business as usual in the Legislature, that he was willing to listen to new ideas. He failed to do so. And most importantly, what we actually needed, what Ontario families want to see now, is a serious plan to take on the serious challenges that beset our great province, but what we got was seriously disappointing, to say the least.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** Tragically disappointing.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My colleague from Renfrew says, "Tragically disappointing."

And then the second shoe falls today, where the finance minister basically gets a pat on the back for a massive \$16-billion deficit from his cabinet colleagues. This is a record deficit. Revenues have gone up, not down, and now we see a \$16-billion deficit. It's actually increased, Speaker, from last year. It should be going down, but it's \$2 billion higher. And then we heard in the economic statement a doubling down on the same failed economic policies that got us into the mess in the first place.

Most disturbing, we saw a finger pointed at everyone except themselves. They'll blame the Americans, they'll blame the tsunami in Japan, they'll blame the Europeans, they'll blame Greece, they'll blame Ottawa, but they say nothing about their own record. I think if we had a bit more honesty from the government, a bit more saying, "Well, maybe we spent too much. Maybe we made the wrong decisions," a bit of straight talk from Dalton McGuinty, for a change, he'd have more credit that he's actually going to carry through on his brand new initiatives he made in this campaign. But we didn't. We saw the same old blame game: that everybody else is at fault. Incredibly, it only took 236 words before the speech from the throne started to blame global economic uncertainty for Ontario's problems.

But the troubles we're seeing in Europe and the United States didn't skip over the border, they didn't skip over the oceans and land solely in Ontario's lap. The recession hit everyone. Economic turmoil internationally affects all 10 provinces, Speaker. But I ask you: Why is it that Ontario continues to get hit harder than the rest of the country? Why is it the province of Ontario fell faster, further, earlier than the other provinces, and is among the last to climb out of it? Why is that, Speaker? So the throne speech actually provided an opportunity to take a sobering look at the big picture, a sober second thought, and then to make the course corrections necessary to actually stimulate economic growth, private sector growth and job creation, and therefore protect the government services that we hold dear, not just for today but for the future as well.

The reality is, we have a jobs crisis in Ontario. We have a debt crisis in Ontario, serious issues that affect both sides of the ledger. On the one side, unsustainable spending increases of 7% a year, Speaker, have resulted in a growing deficit and a ballooning provincial debt that has actually doubled in a decade. So the economy

crawled along at best and government program spending went up by an unsustainable 7% a year.

And on the other side, their economic policies have been demonstrated to be a failure. Corporate welfare, where they pick winners and losers in the marketplace, which sees subsidies of up to \$1 million a job for so-called green energy jobs that disappear as soon as the subsidies run out, that cost us jobs in the broader public sector; tax hikes on businesses and on average families. Their movement from treating energy as an economic fundamental to a social policy has moved Ontario from having among the lowest hydro rates in competing states and provinces to now becoming the most expensive energy jurisdiction of those we compete against. And what does that all do? It stifles private sector job creation. It strangles entrepreneurship. An Ontario that has always been the engine of growth for our country has fallen to the back of the pack, and that impacts on government revenues, Speaker, as fewer people are working in the private sector.

1620

So both of these crises together present a clear and present risk to the vital services government delivers, like health and education. That's why the Ontario PC caucus says, "We don't need more of the same; we don't need warmed-over old ideas. We need action. We need new ideas, because the same failed plan we heard in yesterday's speech is simply not working. Today's fall economic update confirms that the deficit this year is even larger than last: \$16 billion. If the recession and the global market were to blame, then you'd think that all of Canada would be shouldering that same burden equally. It seems reasonable, Speaker. But while Ontario possesses one third of Canada's wealth, we now possess two thirds of the combined provincial deficit. We actually have in Ontario twice the deficit of the rest of Canada, and it's going to take us twice as long as the other provinces to climb out of it. Clearly, we have a spending crisis in the province of Ontario.

What does that mean today? Well, it means Ontario is paying \$10 billion a year to pay for interest on the debt, and just wait until interest rates go up again. To put that in perspective, if those interest payments were actually ministries of government, so if there was the ministry of interest payments, so to speak, it would be the third largest budget in the province, just behind health and education. So that means we spend more on debt interest than we do on transportation: our transit systems, our highways. We spend more on debt interest than we do for police and emergency services to keep our families safe. And if we don't stop the runaway spending now, it's going to get worse each and every year.

So with all due respect to the finance minister's excuses today, the problem isn't Greece, it's not Michigan, it's not Ottawa; it's that this government has a spending problem.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** As my colleague says, the true cause is Dalton McGuinty.



And then \$2.5 billion in new commitments in the throne speech alone. So the deficit goes up and they're going to add on \$2.5 billion on top of that, with no plan on how they're going to pay it. We have not seen to date a single new idea to rein in spending, to root out waste.

I'll tell you what, Speaker. If they won't do it, we're prepared to do it for them. So today I'll introduce an amendment to the throne speech that will call for a legislated mandatory wage freeze for the public sector.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Real action. Any serious discussion on balancing the budget has to include straight talk about the cost of labour. The cost of labour accounts for well over half, about 60%, of government spending, and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently found that Ontario government employees already earn 27% more than their private sector counterparts doing the same job, a result of this Premier signing public sector wage agreements that are 50% more generous than they were under the previous three Premiers. The minister is looking at me. The public sector agreements you have signed are, again, 50% more generous than those signed by the previous Premiers, whether Conservative or NDP. It's clear that Dalton McGuinty's voluntary wage freeze has been a failure. Whether it's unions receiving secret deals on the side, pay increases that take place after an election campaign, whether it's arbitrators thumbing their noses at the taxpayer and giving out agreements that are way out of line with what families on fixed incomes, families in the private sector, can afford, the policies simply have not worked.

A mandatory legislated wage freeze will be impossible to ignore, and most importantly, it will provide up to \$2 billion in savings over two years. And as a son of public servants, coming from a family of teachers, I know this is not always good news to hear if you're in the public service. But, Speaker, I just think that it is not unreasonable to ask public sector employees to forgo getting another raise when Ontario's private sector is losing 100 jobs every hour, every day since the last election. It's fair to public servants and it's fair to every single taxpayer in the province of Ontario.

This brings me to the second major failure of the throne speech: the failure to address Ontario's growing jobs crisis. For three of the last four months, Ontario has lost private sector jobs—as I mentioned, 75,000 jobs last month alone; 2,400 jobs a day, 100 every hour. And while the other nine provinces were actually adding private sector jobs, Ontario shed 75,000.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What's wrong here in Ontario?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My colleague asks what's wrong in Ontario. Something has gone off the rails. We are in a jobs crisis, but there's not one new idea from this government on how to address that jobs crisis.

The only thing I see is that the Premier has a plan now to double down on the job-killing policies that failed us over the last eight years. But as Conservatives, we know that you can't subsidize your way to better jobs and you can't tax your way to greater prosperity. If you could,

with all this government spending we'd all have three jobs by now. But instead, Ontario's unemployment rate has remained above the national average for nearly five years—58 months—and today, as I speak, 500,000 women and men are out on the streets, emailing out their resumes, desperately looking for work here in the province of Ontario: half a million people who have hope for a better day but would see no hope whatsoever in the path we got today from the finance minister.

What has become absolutely clear is that this government has been pursuing the wrong economic policies. They have lost sight of the economic fundamentals that have made Ontario the leader historically when it comes to investment and job creation. And if we continue down this path, London Economics International estimates that Ontario will have the absolutely highest electricity prices in all of Canada by 2015—historically a strength, Speaker, now chasing out jobs from our province.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** How can you be competitive with that?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You can't. When you combine these electricity prices with the absolutely highest regulatory burden, matched by a debt crisis and a spending problem in all of Canada, how do you compete?

We believe there are better days yet to come. We believe in the incredible future of the province of Ontario. We have a strong, skilled workforce. We have an abundance of natural resources that are the envy of the world over. We have excellent market access to both Canadian and American jurisdictions. We have the highest proportion of the population with university or college degrees in North America. Yet under Dalton McGuinty, we're not taking advantage of these opportunities. We're not taking advantage of our core strengths, and Ontario is falling far, far behind the great potential we know she has. And nowhere is the gap between our potential more clear and more alarming than when it comes to job creation.

So again, Speaker, where the McGuinty government fails to act, the Ontario PCs will. We will bring a laser-like focus to standing up for private sector job creation to make Ontario grow again. Towards that end, I bring forward a second amendment to the throne speech. This one will call for reforms to Ontario's apprenticeship system that will create 200,000 jobs in our skilled trades.

Ontario is on the verge of a skilled labour market precipice. The Ontario Ministry of Finance predicts that there will be over a million unfilled skilled job vacancies by 2021, just 10 years away, and that figure could nearly double by 2031.

1630

Under Dalton McGuinty's watch, Ontario is actually producing 46% fewer skilled tradespeople per capita than the rest of Canada—almost half in Ontario.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Something you could fix right away.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It is something you can fix right away.

And let's state very clearly where the problem lies: The McGuinty government continues to cling to an out-



of-date system, stuck in the 1970s, that quite frankly serves the interests of union bosses and special interests instead of helping out aspiring tradespeople, young men and women who want to be electricians, who want to be welders, who want to be plumbers. We're going to stand up for them. We'll stand up for hard-working people, and we'll say no to the special interests and the union bosses.

The apprenticeship reforms we've put on the table today will create 200,000 jobs. They will involve the colleges in our province. They will move us toward a one-to-one journeyman-to-apprenticeship ratio.

I remember being down in Cornwall not too long ago, talking to a young man who desperately wanted to be an electrician; he even knew a small business that wanted to hire him. But because of the outdated system, the outdated ratios, he couldn't get that job. He got a part-time job at Walmart. At least he was paying the bills, but it's not what he dreamt to do.

You will see an Ontario PC caucus that stands up for struggling people, like that young man in Cornwall, to give them the job opportunities and put that incredible skill and dedication to work in our province.

Speaker, for the 48 days since election day the Ontario PCs have put forward good ideas to address Ontario's desperate debt crisis and jobs crisis. Sadly, in my meeting with the Premier last week, or what we've heard in these last two days, Dalton McGuinty refuses to make the necessary decisions to move us forward.

The amendments I reference today are our terms. The Ontario PC caucus will be voting against Dalton McGuinty's failed throne speech unless he supports our call for a freeze of public sector wages and the creation of 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades.

Clearly, if we keep doing more of the same, we'll get more of the same results of the last eight years that are failing hard-working Ontario families, that are plunging us into deeper debt. Putting Ontario back on track is going to take focus. It's going to take openness and honesty. It's going to take straight talk and fresh ideas and new thinking and the courage to act in what's in our long-term interests.

Let me now close with this quick story. You know, I got a rueful chuckle from Sunday's Toronto Star, in which I was described as "strangely impatient about Liberal plans for major restraint and restructuring." "Strangely impatient." Never mind that that's like saying, "After eight years of steady losses, shareholders were growing 'strangely impatient' for a return on their investment." So they got it half right, Speaker.

I am impatient for a day when Ontario is managed with competence and transparency and foresight. I am impatient for a government that spends what we can afford, and I am impatient for a time when our politicians actually mean what they say and say what they mean. So yes, I'm impatient. It's my job, and I'm impatient to get down to work, starting today. And my colleagues in the PC caucus are going to stay that way until we see proof

that the government that got us into this mess has the will and the guts to start to dig us out.

So, while they continue to find the easy way out, while they continue to punt the tough decisions down the road, the Ontario Conservatives will examine the tough choices that this Legislature needs to make, and make soon. While they pass off responsibility to the next government or the next generation, we will take charge today. And while they dither on their beliefs, we are resolute in the principles that got us here—and that made Ontario strong—and the job that Ontario families sent us here to do. And if Dalton McGuinty cannot lead Ontario out of this mess, the Ontario PCs can and the Ontario PCs will.

So, Speaker, I would like to move an amendment that reads as follows:

That the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding after "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session" the following:

"However, this House asks that the government create a legislated and mandatory public sector wage freeze to reduce the size and cost of government and modernize the apprenticeship system to create 200,000 skilled trades jobs in the province of Ontario."

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Hudak has moved an amendment to the throne speech: That the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding after "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session" the following:

"However, this House asks that the government create a legislated and mandatory public sector wage freeze to reduce the cost and size of government and modernize the apprenticeship system to create 200,000 skilled trades jobs in the province of Ontario."

Further debate?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? So shall it be.

The House is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1638.*



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Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

Continued from back cover

**Aboriginal housing / Logement des autochtones**  
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....28

**Flu immunization**  
Mr. Bob Delaney .....28

**Transportation infrastructure**  
Mr. Ted Arnott .....29

**Trinity United Church**  
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong .....29

**Remembrance Day**  
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....29

**Economic development**  
Mr. John O'Toole.....30

**Private members' public business**  
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....30

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /  
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011,  
Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit  
d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur  
le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan**  
First reading agreed to.....30

**York Region Transit Labour Disputes Resolution  
Act, 2011, Bill 3, Mr. Shurman, Mr. Klees, Mrs.  
Munro / Loi de 2011 sur le règlement des conflits  
de travail au sein des services de transport en  
commun de la région de York, projet de loi 3,  
M. Shurman, M. Klees, Mme Munro**  
First reading agreed to.....30  
Mr. Peter Shurman .....31

**Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (HST Rebate for  
Home Heating), 2011, Bill 4, Mr. Mantha / Loi de  
2011 modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail  
(remboursement de la TVH pour le chauffage  
domestique), projet de loi 4, M. Mantha**  
First reading agreed to.....31  
Mr. Michael Mantha .....31

**Wireless Phone, Smart Phone and Data Service  
Transparency Act, 2011, Bill 5, Mr. Oraziatti / Loi  
de 2011 sur la transparence des services de  
téléphone mobile, de téléphone intelligent et de  
transmission de données, projet de loi 5,  
M. Oraziatti**  
First reading agreed to.....31  
Mr. David Oraziatti .....31

**Imitation Firearms Regulation Amendment Act,  
2011, Bill 6, Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2011 modifiant la**

**Loi sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu,  
projet de loi 6, M. Dickson**  
First reading agreed to.....31  
Mr. Joe Dickson .....31

**MOTIONS**

**Private members' public business**  
Hon. John Milloy .....32  
Motion agreed to .....32

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS  
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

**Economic outlook and fiscal review / Perspectives  
économiques et revue financière**  
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....32  
Mr. Tim Hudak.....34  
Mr. Michael Prue .....34

**PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

**Rural schools**  
Mr. Jim Wilson.....35

**Services en français**  
Mme France Gélinas .....35

**Aggregate extraction**  
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....36

**Services diagnostiques**  
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....36

**Lyme disease**  
Mr. Steve Clark .....37

**Office of the Ombudsman**  
Mme France Gélinas .....37

**Correctional facilities**  
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....37

**Diagnostic services**  
Mme France Gélinas .....37

**Correctional facilities**  
Mr. Bill Walker .....38

**Hydro dam**  
Mr. Norm Miller.....38

**ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

**Throne speech debate**  
Mr. Tim Hudak.....38  
Debate adjourned .....41



## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 23 November 2011 / Mercredi 23 novembre 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

#### Throne speech debate

Mr. Michael Coteau .....	9
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	11
Debate adjourned .....	16

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. John O'Toole .....	16
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	16
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	16

#### Leader of the Opposition

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	16
-------------------------------------	----

#### Information technology in the Legislature

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	17
-------------------------------------	----

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Government spending

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	17
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	17

#### Government spending

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	18
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	18

#### Power plants

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	19
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	19

#### Taxation

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	20
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	20

#### Government spending

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	21
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	21

#### Long-term care

Mme France Gélinas .....	21
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	21

#### Anti-bullying initiatives

Ms. Soo Wong .....	22
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	22

#### Correctional facilities

Mr. Bill Walker .....	22
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	23
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	23

#### Child care

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	23
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	23

#### Services en français / French-language services

M. Phil McNeely .....	24
L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	24

#### Power plant

Mr. Victor Fedeli .....	24
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	24

#### Manufacturing jobs

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	25
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	25

#### Aggregate extraction

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	25
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	25

#### Skilled trades

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	26
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	26

#### Aboriginal rights

Ms. Sarah Campbell .....	27
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	27

#### Correction of record

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	27
-------------------------	----

#### Use of question period

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	27
-------------------------------------	----

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Jack MacLaren .....	27
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	27

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

#### Jamie Hubley

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	27
------------------------	----

#### Arts Richmond Hill

Mr. Reza Moridi .....	28
-----------------------	----

#### Elections Ontario

Mr. Steve Clark .....	28
-----------------------	----

*Continued on inside back cover*

20N  
K1  
D23



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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 24 November 2011**

**Jeudi 24 novembre 2011**



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 24 November 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 24 novembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please pray with me.

*Prayers.*

### WITHDRAWAL OF BILL 3

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Yesterday, Mr. Shurman introduced Bill 3, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York. I have had the opportunity to review the bill and have observed that it has been put forward with two co-sponsors, Mr. Klees and Ms. Munro.

Standing order 69 provides for the co-sponsorship of private members' public bills, but states that such bills may be co-sponsored by up to one member from each of the recognized parties and by an independent member. Because there is no provision for co-sponsors of a private member's public bill to be members of the same recognized party, I must therefore find the bill to be out of order and have directed that it be removed from the orders and notices paper.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 23, 2011, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm very proud to stand today on behalf of New Democrats to respond to the throne speech of this minority Parliament.

I think it's pretty clear that New Democrats will not be defeating the government on this speech. We think that the people gave us an actual mandate to work together. That's the mandate that the people of this province gave all of us on October 6. Therefore, what we plan to do is to get down to work. We plan to get down to work.

I think it's interesting that the government made some particular comments in that throne speech. They used words like they were prepared to work together: They were going to be "working together." They were going to be listening. These are commitments that were made in that throne speech just the other day. In the coming

months, what New Democrats are going to do is hold them to those commitments of listening and working together. We're going to see if those commitments are actual commitments or just simply some nice words they decided to throw into the throne speech. I've got to say that I'm hoping it's the former, because the people of this province want change.

I think that if one thing is clear from the result of the election it's that the people want change. They don't want the same old status quo. They're tired of the same politics as usual, as has been served up in this place year after year after year. We just finished an election campaign where candidates actually refused to debate. Instead, they decided to hide behind their negative attack ads.

You know, if we have a Legislature where ministers refuse to listen, and hide behind their talking points, then the people who sent us here, the people who actually make this province work, are going to get lost in the shuffle. What we need to do is make sure all of us are listening and make sure all of us are working together, and that we're not hiding behind things like talking points and other structures to prevent us from responding to the people who put us here to get to work. What we need to do—every single one of us in this chamber, in this new minority Parliament—is put the focus back on the people of Ontario.

I really think there's only one way to do that, Speaker. The way you put the focus back on the people of Ontario is to actually make the Legislature work. I'm not saying that I think it's going to be easy, because I'm not naive. But I do believe that by focusing on real and achievable change, we can get real results for Ontarians.

You know, our caucus has already started. We want to make life more affordable. It's something I heard, not only all the way through the campaign in every corner of the province, but for months and months—in fact, years—before the campaign started. People are feeling the squeeze. Life is getting very, very tough. They don't know where to turn to get a bit of a break.

What we decided as New Democrats, as part of what we needed to do in our election campaign, was respond to exactly the kinds of concerns that the people of Ontario told us they had. One of the things we said we wanted to do, and one of the things we are putting forward as one of our first initiatives, is something to make life more affordable for everyday people, because that's one of the top issues on their minds. So Mike Mantha, our new MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin, will be calling for second reading, this very afternoon, a bill to take the HST off home heating costs.



This bill, to some, may seem a small step. But in fact it's an important step, because it says that we here in this Legislature understand that families are hurting, we understand that we need to make life more affordable for everyday families and we're prepared to protect them from an unfair tax that never should have been applied to daily essentials like home heating in the first place.

0910

This initiative that the member for Algoma-Manitoulin has brought forward is a simple idea, it's an achievable idea and it's something that will do exactly what the people asked us to do, which is to make their lives more affordable. More than anything else, it does what we need to be doing every single day in this Legislature, because it puts people first.

Why does it do that? Because people need help. People have seen very, very hard times in recent years. And I'm not the only one that knows that; I know that every single person in this chamber today knows that. People need help. They've had a very, very tough time. Between September 2008 and May 2009—most of you probably know this—over 250,000 Ontarians lost their jobs—250,000. And that's a trend that has not stopped: We saw just in October another 75,000 full-time jobs lost in Ontario.

But during that time-frame when the recession hit, real GDP plummeted by three percentage points. The unemployment rate in centres like Windsor and Oshawa grew into the double digits, and Toronto wasn't all that far behind.

The recovery that we've seen since those times has been uneven; it's been unreliable and uncertain. Although many people are still forecasting some economic growth in the next year, these days nobody's betting their house on it. People are very concerned. Economists are very concerned.

It's been a rough ride for everybody for quite some time, but middle-income earners, middle-income households that were already feeling the squeeze are now saying that they're actually falling behind. Recent surveys have found that half of Canadians have experienced a deterioration in their financial situation over the last year; 60% of families are living paycheque to paycheque. Ontario's consumer confidence index remains the lowest—rock bottom—of all the provinces in this country. Ontarians have the highest job anxiety of anyone else in Canada. One out of every four people are saying that they or someone in their household is worried about losing their job.

Now, I would put it to every member in this chamber and to you, Speaker, that we cannot succeed as a province—this province will not succeed—if every day people continue to feel like they're falling behind.

*Interruption.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This is a rookie mistake. It'll probably never happen again, right?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's for sure. He just lost it.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, we learn by our mistakes, that's definitely sure. Maybe the government will have learned by its mistakes of the past eight years.

Anyway, people who are worried about making ends meet are not going to do the kinds of things that help our economy. People who are worried about making ends meet are not going to go out and buy a new home. They're not going to make those big kinds of capital purchases if they're really concerned about what the very near future brings. People who think things are not going to get better don't see in their horizon the opportunity for a new and better job are not going to spend the time upgrading their skills, because there's nothing there for them at the end of that process.

There's a growing concern from economists that the household debt and the economic insecurity that we're facing is becoming a drag on our economy. If our economy is actually going to work, families need to be looking towards the future with some confidence, with some assurance that things are going to get better.

How do we confront this kind of challenge? How do we confront this kind of scenario? I think we need to be innovative in our thinking. I think we have to stop putting blind faith in ideology and some of the tired ideas of the past. We need to recognize absolutely that the private sector will create jobs, but also that government has a very key role to play, and we need to put the people of this province and their economic well-being at the heart of all of our plans. If the people of Ontario are financially secure, then the economy of Ontario and of the entire country will be secure as well.

I think New Democrats realize better than most that if we're going to confront those challenges that we face, the challenges ahead, we can't do so under a massive debt burden. When we put our platform together, we were very careful about ensuring that we were tackling that debt burden, as the other two parties did in their platforms as well.

Some of you may be surprised to hear this, but economists have actually studied the federal Department of Finance's fiscal tables, and they have found that New Democratic governments have run fewer deficit budgets than any other political party in government. This is a fact that has often gone unnoticed, but it is the absolute truth. And not only have New Democrats run fewer deficit budgets, but, moreover, they have run smaller deficits as a share of GDP when they have had to run deficit budgets. New Democrats have achieved this success by taking a balanced approach.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** One of the members across the way is referring to the federal Liberal leader when he used to be the head of a government here in Ontario as an example. I have to say that one bad apple won't ruin the bushel when it comes to our record. In fact, that record is part of an overall scenario that shows very clearly that New Democrats have done a much better job than Liberals, a much better job than Conservatives, a much better job than even the Socreds when you put them into the mix. The bottom line is that New Democrats have run, historically, across Canada, fewer deficit budgets, and when we have run them, they have been lower in



terms of the ratio of deficit to GDP. If you don't like the facts, go talk to the finance folks at the federal government. They're the ones who put the facts together. The facts speak for themselves.

But I want to get back to the point: that the way this is achieved with New Democratic governments is with a balanced approach. When I say "a balanced approach," what do I mean by that? I mean that you have to look carefully at the province's revenues and expenditures. The deficit that we're currently running was absolutely essential. We supported a lot of the measures that led to that deficit. It was essential to create jobs and ensure that our economy was able to stay on track. But now we need a long-term, responsible plan to get back into balance, one that doesn't put an already shaky economic recovery at greater risk. We have to be very careful. It's a very, very delicate process. We also don't want to have the kinds of solutions that put more pressure on households who are already feeling the squeeze, households who are already quite worried about the future.

Now, the Premier has said that he actually agrees with some of these principles. He says he's not going to proceed with across-the-board cuts. He says he's not going to increase the privatization of our health care system. I was happy to hear those remarks from the Premier. I was quite happy to hear that. But I have to say, having been here for a couple of years now, I'm also quite skeptical. Ontario families have heard these kinds of promises before, and these kinds of promises, unfortunately, have often been followed by dramatic across-the-board cuts. So, notwithstanding what is being said, we turn around and the exact opposite happens.

Ontario can get its books back into balance, Speaker, but not without balance.

In the last campaign, I committed to an expenditure management review, and if I was the Premier, I would be making sure that that was going to happen. We have to look critically at government spending and find those savings. But I don't think that's enough. I believe that we need to have an honest look at everything if we're going to balance the books of the province; if we're going to do that, most importantly, without breaking the backs of the people who make the province work.

0920

I think we need to get past some of the same old ideas that get recycled around this place. Since the recession, whether it's Stephen Harper in Ottawa or Dalton McGuinty right here in Ontario, the solution seems to be the same: another round of corporate tax giveaways. That's the solution that this government has brought. That's the solution that the federal government under Mr. Harper has brought. In order to pay for those corporate tax cuts, they cut services to people. That's the solution of the Liberals; that's the solution of the Conservatives federally.

In the next two years the government here in Ontario plans to spend \$600 million in corporate tax cuts—\$600 million in corporate tax cuts—and, a few years later, over a billion dollars a year on a scheme that this government put together with Stephen Harper to let Ontario's biggest

corporations write off taxes on expenses like entertainment.

Now, that's not only a misplaced priority, in my humble opinion. The government is at the same time spending as much as a billion dollars to cancel private power deals—private power deals that they themselves put in place. How does that make any sense? Salaries for public sector CEOs have been climbing by as much as six figures a year in the province of Ontario. Meanwhile, we're being told that there's a crisis in Ontario's budget and people are going to have to tighten their belts. Obviously, only some people are going to have to tighten their belts. Other people are going to have an easy ride here.

I just don't get it. There's this definition that is talked about by everyone from Dr. Einstein to Dr. Phil, and it goes like this: The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over again and actually expecting to get a different result. I would say corporate tax cuts, in the way this government and the federal government are implementing them year over year over year and which we get nothing for, are definitely an example of insanity.

You know, these same old tired solutions that we have been trying for over a decade—for a couple of decades now—are going to produce the exact same results. Look where they've gotten us. Look where this direction has gotten us. It's gotten us nowhere. We now have one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the world and we have record household debt, we have record highs of unemployment and we have people who are falling behind in every corner of this province.

Lowering the corporate tax rate another point or giving Ontario's biggest corporations a tax write-off when they entertain at the SkyDome will not create jobs, and it won't help the families that are facing tough times here in Ontario. But on the other hand, closing another emergency room, closing another child care centre or hiking transit fares is just adding another burden to families that are already feeling the squeeze.

You know, I believe we actually need to understand the challenges that we're facing and be more innovative about how we deal with them. We all know that productivity growth is lagging in the province of Ontario. The Premier actually recently expressed a little bit of confusion about Ontario's dismal progress in that regard. I don't really think it's all that much of a mystery: We need far better, more targeted financial incentives for business capital investment. Across-the-board cuts are not cutting it. We've now had two successive governments that have invested in across-the-board corporate tax cuts: the Liberals in the last two terms and the Conservatives before them.

Now, as I made very clear during the campaign, I don't think we need more of that. If Ontario's business is going to succeed, Ontario's government needs to focus their resources where they can do the most good. If the government is going to be investing \$2 billion a year, I want to make sure every penny of that \$2 billion is used as effectively as possible. And I don't think further cor-



porate tax cuts are giving us effective productivity bang for our buck. We are not seeing that reinvestment. We are not seeing it at all. In fact, what we're seeing is the opposite. We're seeing those tax cuts going into cash reserves. That's what's growing: cash reserves for corporations. Not investments in capital, equipment, machinery—that's not happening.

I do think, however, that there are some other ways of working with business to create the kind of response, the kind of results, that we want to see. I think we can actually do different things to stimulate investment and to create jobs.

During the campaign I put a couple of proposals forward: an investment tax credit to specifically help those companies that were ready to increase productivity and create jobs in Ontario. Investment tax credits are much more promising as a way to stimulate critical new investments, because they provide increased cash flow that is directly targeted to investment.

We also talked about a training tax credit in the campaign that actually rewards the employers who are hiring people and who are investing in training. If we want to create prosperity, if we want to ensure that we have a strong economic future, we need to have the people who have the skills to perform the value-added jobs of the future. And giving some recognition to those employers who actually do that training on the job as opposed to giving across-the-board tax cuts, which actually rewards everybody including those employers who simply poach trained workers off of other employers that actually do the training—we think a targeted approach that rewards those companies that are doing the training is a far, far better way to go. So a tax credit that rewards training.

The other one that we talked about in the campaign, of course, was a tax credit that actually rewards job creation, because, let's face it, we have a crisis in jobs in terms of what's happening here in the province. We need to create more jobs; across-the-board tax cuts don't do that. If you give a company an across-the-board tax cut, they can do anything they want with that tax cut. They could create a job. They don't have to create a job. They could send all their jobs down south like Navistar did. Right, member for Essex? Very close to his home town.

So a tax credit that rewards job creation is an idea that actually incents the companies to create more jobs. It creates more employment. Similar measures are currently being debated in the United States, and the Economic Policy Institute in the US has estimated that a tax break for new hires would lead companies to add 2.8 million more workers this year than they would have without that kind of break. Now, granted it's a bigger economy, more people, but 2.8 million new jobs is not insubstantial. That's a policy that actually works. It's the sort of measure that we need here in Ontario if we are going to create jobs and help households.

There was one other thing that we talked about during the campaign that we thought was an important way to help create jobs and get the economy moving a little bit, and that was a reduction in the small business tax rate.

It's interesting, some of you may not be aware of this, but New Democrat governments in Manitoba have actually entirely eliminated taxes on small business because they recognize that small business helps drive the economy.

Now, this proposal that we brought forward at the very, very beginning of the campaign was so popular that Dalton McGuinty was making the same commitment himself within a couple of weeks. So the government's free to steal our ideas. We think it's great if they steal our ideas. We hope they steal more of our ideas. Actually, we want them to steal all of our ideas, because I think we have the right ideas. We have different ideas than they do. We've seen how their ideas work—they don't. We want to see them steal more of our ideas. We look forward to putting forward all kinds of ideas and we look forward to putting forward legislation.

0930

The measures that I'm laying out are ones that would provide much-needed stimulus where it is needed, and that's the point. But they would also be much more cost-effective for a government that needs to be watching every single penny. I say that because the dollars that we are counting in the context of our fiscal plans for the future are ones that are going to be very precious, and we're going to need to make sure that we're using those dollars very carefully as we focus—or as we should be focusing—on the priorities of Ontario families.

The quality of our health care system is always at the top of the list, and I certainly heard from a lot of people all through the campaign about their concern about the lack of the kind of health care that people need being available for them when they need it. That's shameful when everyone knows it's the top priority and this government has allowed that top priority to erode in terms of people's confidence of their health care system.

Fifty years ago, Tommy Douglas and the pioneers of medicare dreamed of a medical system where people didn't just receive treatment when they fell ill, but they received support so that they didn't fall ill in the first place. Douglas saw this as the very best way to make publicly provided health care services truly sustainable. And I agree. We have to get into that other way of doing things, that other focus. Our current health care model ships people into expensive hospital care even when everyone agrees that that's not necessarily where they should be.

I'm going to cite a particular example. There are currently 4,558 patients in Ontario hospitals. Most of those patients are seniors, taking up 16% of hospital beds, even though they no longer require hospital care. Providing care for these patients costs our health care system \$450 a day in hospital, compared to as little as \$50 a day with home care services or about \$130 to \$150 a day in a nursing home.

When you speak to seniors, they say very clearly—and their friends and family members say very clearly—that they are not happy when they're forced to live in hospitals. They'll tell you they would much prefer living at home with supports or in a decent long-term-care facility. That's where they would prefer to be.



I've had the opportunity to speak with seniors myself. I've talked to them as they wait and their family members wait for them to get a bed in long-term care. I have to say, it is a heartbreaking and frustrating experience.

It makes no policy sense whatsoever that this continues to happen. There's been a crisis in alternative-level-of-care beds for years and years on end. We see emergency wards lined up—in London particularly but in so many other communities—ambulance after ambulance after ambulance that can't get their patients offloaded into the hospital because the hospital beds are all full because there isn't enough long-term care and there isn't enough home care to get the patients out and getting the care that they need in a much more humane way. So you're getting a problem in the emergency wards. It's happening everywhere. It's been happening for years and years and years under this government's watch, and it's still happening to this day.

It is unacceptable that we still have this crisis, that we still have this problem, and there has been virtually nothing done about it, notwithstanding the promises that have been made. As a matter of fact, in a number of communities, hundreds of beds have been promised, years and years have gone by, and those beds have not materialized. I think of the fiasco at Grace hospital in Windsor as a prime example. Unfortunately, it's only one example of many where beds were promised and never materialized. The state of the hospital system in that community is in crisis, just like it is in London and so many other places in this province.

It makes no policy sense whatsoever. That's why in the last campaign we made a real commitment to expanding home care services and investing in long-term-care beds. It was also part of our rationale for our proposals for expanding family health care clinics and birthing centres for new mothers. As Tommy Douglas envisioned back in those days when he set out the path towards a sustainable medicare system, one of the things that was really clear is that we have to give people the supports they need before they get sick, and things like family health care centres and birthing centres for moms are the kinds of things that lead us toward that vision. By providing modest supports for people that help them stay healthy, we can contain costs and enhance our health care system.

But to do that we have to think and plan very, very carefully—very, very carefully. You know, when I think about the delays and disasters that occurred in the implementation of much-needed systems of electronic health records in this province, I shake my head. It is an example of what not to do. It wasn't well thought out, it wasn't well planned and it cost a billion dollars or more in money that we couldn't recoup. It's shameful that that took place.

We now have a system of local health integration networks that I also think are problematic. We need to have some reform in those systems. We said in our campaign that we have to scrap those LHINs and replace them with truly accountable, truly transparent and truly

responsive models. It's unfortunate that once again, in its rush to get something out the door, the government sent it out half-baked and did a terrible job of implementing that model. Now we have so many communities that are angry with the LHINs and that are distrustful of the decisions that are being made there.

It's really sad, because it wasn't well thought out and it wasn't well planned. As a result, the LHINs have been a disaster in many, many communities. There may be one exception—maybe two—but in most communities they have been an utter failure, not for any reason except that the government shoved it out the door and didn't plan well and didn't think well. Now we have a great disappointment when it comes to the way the local health integration networks were put together.

I think that there's also another important principle—whether it's in health care or in other areas—that we need to commit to: That is the fact that public ownership and public accountability are the best ways to contain costs. If you're just spending all kinds of extra money on making sure that, particularly in health care, those private operators are lining their pockets, then I think you're not doing a good service to the people of Ontario. I think we need to be very, very careful about how we move forward, whether it's in long-term care or home care.

We've watched this government and the one before it allow our home care system to become virtually completely privatized. That was a proactive decision that was taken by both these governments. I have a real concern that that was a big mistake, and now we're suffering the results of that.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, later today the member for Algoma-Manitoulin is going to be bringing forward for second reading his private member's bill on the HST—particularly on getting the HST off home heating. You know, the government is proposing other measures in this regard. They're talking about other things they want to do to make life more affordable. We're going to look at those measures. We're going to look at those measures that the government is going to bring forward. We're going to talk about them. We're going to perhaps suggest changes and amendments to them. But this afternoon there is an opportunity for every single member in this Legislature to think carefully about what is on top of everyone's mind right now.

On top of everyone's mind, as the temperatures plummet and the furnaces go up, is how are they going to get through the winter months and still make ends meet with the cost of energy going up and the HST adding insult to injury on those home heating bills? I would invite the members of all parties to seriously consider, in private members' business, supporting the bill being brought forward by the member for Algoma-Manitoulin.

I say that because we have to look at what the priorities of this minority Parliament need to be. I don't think that another useless corporate tax giveaway that doesn't do a darned thing in terms of job creation—it simply allows these corporations to shovel more money into their cash reserves—is the right way to go right now.



Maybe those guys need to take a bit of the pain. Maybe those guys need to actually just stay where they are. I'm not even saying put it back up to 14 at this point. Hit a pause button on those plans to give more and more and more breaks to corporations while families suffer and are unable to pay their bills. It's just a matter of priority.

0940

I think the priority right now for the people of Ontario needs to be putting them at the top of the list for a change, putting their affordability—their ability to pay their bills, their ability to make ends meet day in and day out—at the top of the list.

I would urge MPPs to seriously consider what the people in their ridings are thinking about, what the people in their ridings are concerned about, and how, in this first week here in the Legislature, we can actually show them that we were listening to what they had to say during the election campaign, we were paying attention to the concerns they brought to the table. Because they didn't just bring them to my table; I'm sure they brought them to all of your tables as well. I'm hopeful that private members' business will be the opportunity for all of the members in this minority Parliament to actually work together and make a change for the people of Ontario.

I'm going to wrap up my remarks, notwithstanding some of the interesting comments that are coming from the other side.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The blah, blah, blah.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Yes, exactly, the blah, blah, blah—to try to just refocus where I went in terms of my remarks.

We set out the fact that we are not going to make the government fall on the matter of the throne speech. We think there were a couple of words that we could pick out, words that were referencing things like working together, referencing things like listening, which would be wonderful changes in here. In fact, a little bit of the—the member for Trinity–Spadina calls it the “blah, blah, blah.” You don't listen when you're blah, blah, blahing, I think is part of the point. But we're certainly hoping that those words actually had some meaning to them and they weren't simply put in to the throne speech as a bit of sugar coating and nice words for us to hang on to.

So we do intend to hold the government to their commitment, as they stated it in the throne speech, to work together, to listen to what other parties have to bring to the table, because I think in the response that the people gave us on October 6, they have to know very clearly that they weren't given all of the power in this place; they were given some marching orders that said it's time for you to get off your high horse and start dealing with other parties and not have the arrogance of a majority government anymore but have the humility of a minority government. I'd like to see some of that coming from the other side of this chamber, to be honest with you, Speaker.

I say that not because it's something that only I want to see. I heard it on the doorsteps; I heard it in every community during the leader's tour of this campaign.

People are tired of the arrogance and, frankly, they're tired of the partisanship and they're tired of the politics as usual, because when that happens, they don't see themselves being reflected in here. They see the fights, they see the brinkmanship, they see the anger, they see the noise, they see all kinds of shenanigans, but what they also see is that, in all of that mess, the regular folks of Ontario have been forgotten. They've been set aside for some other game that's being played that doesn't have their interests at the heart.

I think that's why they voted for change. That's why they voted for something different this time around. They said no to brinkmanship; they said no to nastiness; they said no to empty rhetoric, no to scoring political points and insulting each other just for the sake of doing it.

The people of this province are facing very serious challenges, very real challenges. I truly believe, as I said earlier, that if the people are doing better, then we're all going to do better. If the people of this province are feeling secure and strong about the future, then this province has a strong and secure future. The crisis in household debt and household finances is definitely hurting our economy. We need to shore folks up.

Now, we are in the process of dealing with balancing our budget over the next couple of years, and I think we have to make sure that we keep priorities in order, that it can't just be about giving the big corporations a break and forgetting about the everyday families. That well-worn path is one that isn't working. We need to change the focus.

We've heard those talks before, as I mentioned, those comments about painless cuts and balancing budgets with cuts that are not going to hurt. We've heard it from everyone from Mike Harris to Paul Martin, quite frankly. Every time we hear those words, we turn around and see the exact opposite. We see very, very painful cuts. We see families suffering as a result of those cuts. So I think that we need to rebalance our priorities. As I said in the speech, we need to make sure that we balance the budget, we balance the books, but that we do that in a very balanced way.

I don't think across-the-board corporate tax cuts in this context is balanced. I don't think allowing CEO salaries at the highest levels in our public systems to continue to grow by six figures every single year is a balanced approach; I don't think that's a balanced way to do things. I don't think willy-nilly cancelling of power plants and not telling the public exactly how much it's going to cost us is a balanced way of doing things. I think what we need to do is focus on the affordability of everyday life for families. We need to make sure that we're putting them front and centre in our exercise of balancing the budget. I think we start today, this afternoon, by getting the HST off of home heating.

As I said, Speaker, we need to look seriously, and we are committed. New Democrats are committed to working hard here. We're rolling up our sleeves, and we're going to look seriously at all of the proposals that the government brings forward. We're hoping that we are

going to get the same respect from them: that they will look seriously at all of the things we bring forward regardless of in which context that is. There are many opportunities in this place, as we all know, to have those kinds of conversations, and we look forward to it. We're going to do our job. We expect and I think the people of Ontario expect that all 107 of us are going to do our jobs here.

What we want to see very clearly is some broad-based measures to make life more affordable for everyday Ontarians. We also want to see a focus on health care. We want to see a focus that says it's not the most important thing to make sure that the CEO gets his raise at the hospital every year. The only person that should be waiting in a hospital is the CEO waiting for his raise, not the hundreds of people waiting in the emergency room for decent care.

Finally, Speaker, we want to make sure that we're focusing on jobs. We want to make sure that as we deal with the fiscal pressures that this province is facing and the job that Ontarians have given us over the next little while, we want to focus on jobs. We don't want to have massive corporate tax cuts that aren't working. We want to have focused plans; focused, targeted ways of getting people back to work; focused, targeted ways of getting people trained; focused, targeted ways of encouraging investment. That's why we believe the things that have been successful in other jurisdictions will be successful here in Ontario as well, and that is a tax credit system for those very goals: job creation, investment and training. New Democrats want to see some of that happening in the next little while as well.

I'm going to end by saying that there are other things that we brought to the table in the campaign. We think we can create more jobs through a buy-Ontario policy. We should be using our own tax dollars, the money that we ask people to pay to help run our province, to actually put those same people back to work. We think a buy-Ontario policy is a smart job-creation policy and would ask that the government consider it in the next little while. We think it's really important to see that our natural resources, which we're pulling out of the ground all across the north, are actually being processed in Ontario, putting northerners back to work.

These are real initiatives, Speaker, that need to be tried because the same old way, the same old path, the same old plans, processes and ideas that have been recycled on that side of the bench—many of which they got from the Conservative side of the bench—aren't working and haven't worked for Ontarians. Ontarians told us that loudly and clearly during the campaign: Things are not working for them. What we need to do is work together—find ways of working together—to make it work for them for a change and to put people at the front of the priority list.

With that, I end my remarks, and I thank the members for paying such rapt attention, including the member for St. Catharines.

I now move the adjournment of the debate. Not yet? Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I move adjournment of the debate, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Any further business?

**Hon. John Milloy:** No further business, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That being the case, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 0951 to 1030.*

#### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear ribbons in recognition of Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to introduce the family of page Sebastian Gayowsky and welcome his mom, Susan Karney, and Anna Gayowsky and Christopher Gayowsky, his siblings. Thank you for being here today.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Today, Alli Meyer is page captain, and I would like to welcome her parents, Deb and Tim, and her brother, Craig Meyer. They all just happen to be from my hometown of Teeswater. Welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

The member from Pickering–Scarborough East.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Speaker, and I'd like to congratulate you on your election, first.

I'm very happy to welcome the family of one of our new pages, Ms. Madeline Braney from Pickering–Scarborough East. Her dad, Chris Braney, is a school trustee in the Durham board of education, and his wife, Sylvia Braney, is here as well. Welcome to you all.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce Ms. Gular Yusibzade from the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions?

It is now time for—oh, excuse me.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. I'm new, so I want to make sure I'm doing this properly. As a point of order: It's the second day of questioning and the Premier isn't here. Is he allowed not to be here?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will wait. The standing orders do request that when the Speaker is standing, everyone is quiet.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And that will get you a warning.

The member is out of order. It is not proper to bring attention to the absence of anyone in this House.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask, please, that we have the assembly of our new pages.

My friends, we will be greeting our pages in the traditional way. I really believe it's an important aspect of what we do here, and I know we will show our appreciation. I offer that if anyone in particular from a certain riding wishes to amplify their greeting, please feel free to do so.

We have, from Don Valley East, Yousef Abdel Rahman; from Halton, Laibah Ashfaq; from Parkdale–High Park, Carolyn Bayley; from Pickering–Scarborough East, Madeline Braney; from Mississauga–Erindale, Michela Brooks; from St. Paul's, Andrew Clifford; from Toronto–Danforth, Tara Collins; from Windsor West, Christian D'Agnillo; from Ottawa–Vanier, Danica Davies; from Don Valley West, Sebastian Gayowsky; from London–Fanshawe, Theodore Giesen; from Scarborough–Rouge River, Ashley Jones; from Ottawa South, Prakriti Kharel; from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Lila Kloppenburg; from Perth–Wellington, Samuel Knechtel; from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Aidan Lehecka; from Wellington–Halton Hills, Emily Rose Longo Belbin; from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Bernadette McCann; from Huron–Bruce, Alli Meyer; from Scarborough Southwest, Mobarat Shahriar; from London West, Owen Thompson; and, from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Daniel Vander Hout.

These are our pages.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question, I guess, is directed to the Acting Premier today. Yesterday, the finance minister's economic statement saw about a \$2-billion increase in the provincial deficit. The deficit actually went up, despite more revenue coming into the treasury. In fact, 26 out of the 28 ministers saw an increase in their spending—26 out of 28. At a time when we have a spending crisis in Ontario, 26 out of 28 saw increases from the previous year. So I ask the Acting Premier: Will you speak to the finance minister and instruct him to bring in a mandatory wage freeze for public sector workers in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, let's get the facts straight. In 2010, we laid out a deficit elimination

projection. In fact, this year we are ahead of schedule, where we said we would be. The member is right; compared to last year's budget, the deficit has gone up, because last year we overachieved on the target we set due to a number of one-time events.

1040

Mr. Speaker, we are going to stay on target. We are going to achieve our balanced budget according to the timelines we outlined, unlike the federal Conservative government, which has now stretched their timeline to balance. And we will continue to work with all.

Last year, as has been pointed out by Mr. Drummond and others, we have actually cut the rate of growth in spending in half. We think this is the right, balanced, reasonable approach and the fair approach. We're going to continue down that path.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Hudak:** Well, Speaker, if the finance minister pats himself on the back for actually increasing the deficit, despite revenue going up, and calls himself an overachiever, it certainly doesn't speak well for getting out of the mess that we have here in the province of Ontario.

Let me ask the overachieving finance minister if he will think this through. He said that he opposes a mandatory wage freeze, as I saw him on the media yesterday responding to the PC call for a mandatory wage freeze. But, Minister, you do have a mandatory wage freeze when it comes to non-union workers in the province of Ontario, but it's steady as she goes with increases for union workers. Let me ask the finance minister: Why the dual system? Why the haves and have-nots? Why do you have a wage freeze for non-union, but you allow union wages to continue to increase?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Leader of the Opposition is again selectively using quotes. Let me say this: What we did say yesterday is that in fact the average rate of settlement in the Ontario public and broader public sectors is now lower than the private sector, it's lower than the federal, and it's lower than our municipal colleagues. There are challenges to a wage freeze that are legal and constitutional in nature; it doesn't preclude a wage freeze, but as we move forward in a reasonable and sensible approach to this, we have to be careful that it gets done properly.

The final point I made is that this government, unlike previous governments, does not want to scapegoat public servants. We don't want to scapegoat teachers, doctors and others. We need their help as we move forward. At the end of the day, we may not agree on everything, but this is about all of us working together for a brighter future for Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** But Minister, that's precisely my point: You're not working together; you're dividing public sector workers. You're saying to some that aren't in unions, "Your wages are frozen, but if you happen to join a union, you'll get wage increases just like you did in the past." I don't understand why you have this double

standard when it comes to a wage freeze in the province of Ontario. Our position is clear: Treat everyone equally, whether they're union or non-union. Bring in a mandatory public sector wage freeze and save the taxpayers \$2 million. Will you do the right thing?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we have to respond to the realities—legal, constitutional—that confront any government. The member yesterday cited other levels of government that have lost court fights in this very same situation.

Again, we want to make sure that we avoid the kind of scapegoating that occurred under a previous government. We will ultimately likely disagree with some of the unions and their positions on things, but this is not about blaming. Our non-unionized personnel have done a great job over the last two years. We are grateful that they have accepted that and taken it as leaders in their organizations. We also achieved zero and zero with a number of bargaining units. I think the responsible, reasonable and fair approach, the steady leadership approach, is to do this carefully, working with our partners, both in the union and non-union sectors of the public and broader public sectors.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Minister of Finance and his previous answers: The Minister of Finance referenced the Constitution and he says that the reason he has a double standard when it comes to wage freezes—non-union are frozen but unions continue to get increases—is because of the Constitution. The minister very well knows that there is a mandatory wage freeze in British Columbia, in Alberta and in New Brunswick, and as well, Quebec has used a mandatory wage freeze.

Could the minister put on the table today the constitution of the province of Ontario? Surely the same Constitution applies to the other provinces. In your argument, why does the Constitution apply one way to BC, Alberta, New Brunswick and Quebec but differently to the province of Ontario? Can you answer that for me?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member needs to reference the BC Supreme Court decision and a number of others that have constrained governments.

The final point I would make on that: Mr. Drummond, an adviser we brought on, and others have advised and will advise the Leader of the Opposition and others that wage freezes tend not to work, either in the short or long term. What tends to happen is—say it's a two-year freeze: It tends to hold things down for two years, and then after it comes off, there's a big bump-up for catch-up.

That being said, wages and benefits represent 55 cents of every dollar the provincial government spends in the public and broader public sectors. There's no question that that will be part of the discussion we will have with all sectors of the economy as we move back to a balanced budget and create the conditions that will allow us to sustain the best education and health care systems in the world.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Okay, so the finance minister now is backing away from his constitutional argument, realizing that's a false argument because there are wage freezes in British Columbia, Alberta and New Brunswick, and Quebec has done it, too. Now he tries argument number 2, in which he says there's going to be catch-up and that the wages will have to increase afterwards.

Well, then, I'll ask the finance minister: Why did you impose a wage freeze on non-union workers? How much is the catch-up going to be? If you say wage freezes don't work, that there's catch-up, that Don Drummond is against them, then why the heck did you apply a wage freeze on non-union workers? Are you for it? Are you against it? Explain yourself.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, we applied a zero and zero across the non-bargained sector, which represented one measure among a variety of measures that have helped us bring the deficit down from \$24.7 billion to \$16 billion this year.

The Leader of the Opposition cannot underestimate the importance of making sure that whatever steps we take—whether it's on wages or other—respect court decisions, respect processes that are outlined and, most importantly, respect the people who are on the other side of the table, whether it's non-bargained employees or bargained employees.

It might be doctors. I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition wants a freeze put on doctors. That's the next contract that is up for negotiation, and we'll look forward to his position on that. There are big collective agreements with teachers that are coming up as well, and I'm sure he'll apply that same sort of standard to doctors and teachers as he would to others.

These are challenging times. We're going to work with our partners, both union and non-union, professional and non-professional, to build the best—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It's just hard to follow the finance minister's arguments. He's in favour of a wage freeze, except when he's not. And we have to watch out for the Constitution, except it somehow doesn't apply to the other provinces.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** He's dancing all over.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** He is dancing all over, as my deputy leader says.

Let's just get to the bottom line here. The reason why you're not bringing in a mandatory wage freeze on the union side is because of your friends in the Working Families Coalition. I know your friends in the Working Families Coalition pull a lot of strings on decision-making over there.

We just think it is fair to treat everybody the same, whether you're a non-union worker or a union worker. It's fair to public sector workers, it's fair to taxpayers, and it will save us \$2 billion. So who are you going to listen to: taxpayers—an argument of fairness—or your friends in the Working Families Coalition?



You have no arguments left, Minister. If you support a wage freeze, make it the same for everybody and save \$2 billion for the taxpayers in the province of Ontario.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let's put this in perspective. For budget purposes, we have already not increased funding for collective agreements over zero and zero. I can assure you, based on statements by leaders in the various public sector unions in the last 24 to 48 hours, they're not entirely happy at all with any of this.

It's not about that. It's very much about a better future for Ontario. It's very much about understanding that we have a long and protracted period of restraint and reform that is going to require the help and co-operation of the public and broader public sectors, both in the bargained and the non-bargained sectors.

We choose to take the reasonable approach. We choose to work with people, Mr. Speaker. We reject the politics of division of that party.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We reject the Leader of the Opposition's record when it came to firing civil servants and hiring them back as consultants at more money. We reject that. We're going to work with everyone in this province to get through these challenging global circumstances and build a better future for all Ontarians.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question's to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, the Deputy Premier indicated that the government found unallocated revenue. I just want the Deputy Premier to explain which programs they over-budgeted and when he found out about those over-budgeted programs.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In terms of the offsets associated with the new healthy home renovation tax credit—and I'm delighted the Premier is out today explaining that to senior citizens across Ontario—we found the first-year costs were \$60 million, I say to the leader of the third party. We're taking \$10 million from MEDI's fund for new job growth.

The second piece is on the seniors' home property tax credit. The amount we budgeted for was higher than the demand has been for it, so there's another \$50 million there for the first year. It rises in the second year, and in the third year we take unallocated capital that hasn't been to bring it to the full \$136 million.

We think that's reasonable; we think it's responsible. We've identified specific reductions elsewhere to fund something we think the vast majority of Ontarians support and are in favour of doing.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** There seems to be a little bit of a pattern of the government finding unallocated funds when it suits their purpose and it suits their agenda, and then arguing that the cupboard's completely bare when it doesn't suit their agenda.

When exactly did the minister know that there was all this money in the cupboard?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If you look at estimates that this Legislature has approved and that will be re-tabled today because of the election, you will see that we lay out projections on a line-by-line basis, for tax expenditures as well as other expenditures, Mr. Speaker. These numbers do vary. That's why we have quarterly updates and, most importantly, the fall statement. So in fact for this year it became evident at the publication of the fall statement and the leadup to that period. These numbers, again, are savings projections. We have to move forward into the future. We think that's reasonable and responsible.

I should also say to the member opposite, we've left ministers flexibility and will, through the treasury board process, allow ministers between now and the actual budget—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —if those ministers find other offsets that make more sense or if in fact those numbers change between now and the publication of public accounts, we can offset elsewhere. It's reasonable accounting. It's standards that are generally accepted. They're audited by the Auditor General—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, before the House resumed I actually sent a letter to all the leaders asking them to support my initiative to have the Auditor General review the province's finances so that all parties could get an understanding of exactly what the fiscal challenges were. Unfortunately, that was something that the Deputy Premier opposed at the time. I want to know if he still opposes that kind of initiative?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Auditor General does audit everything. In fact, we submitted our budget to him in advance of the election. The Auditor General indicated that he felt that our revenue projections were accurate. It turns out we've had a great downturn in revenues. He felt that our expenditure estimates were aggressive, and I acknowledged at the time that he was right about that.

Again, Auditors General play an important function. We created a number of these roles under the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act. The Auditor General will be tabling his report at the beginning of December. I know all members look forward to that.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with our auditors, the Auditor General, members of this House, our public accounts committee, estimates—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and we'll look forward to working with all parties in the House, where there are offsets, to be able to try to do some of the things that I suspect we're all going to be able to agree—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In fact, that is why we wanted the auditor to give us an update before the House re-



sumed, because of the dancing-number games that the government tends to play. We just wanted to all have equal footing as we came into this minority Parliament.

Nonetheless, my next question is again to the Deputy Premier. Later today, we're going to be debating a move to give everyday people a much-needed break on their cost of home heating, a move that this Deputy Premier says we simply can't afford. Why should families believe him when this government consistently finds the money for their own priorities, yet cannot find the money to help everyday families?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, we campaigned against doing that. We set up our tax plan for jobs and growth. We believe that was the right approach.

I remind the member opposite that we created the most generous sales tax credit in the country to help Ontarians of more modest means. Her proposal will actually benefit those who are with bigger homes and wealthier. We prefer a more targeted approach. I think the biggest beneficiaries will be those who are probably the least able to pay it.

Our sales tax credit, which has been hailed by a whole bunch of people including the Centre for Policy Alternatives, is viewed as a progressive piece of tax policy. We took 90,000 people off the tax rolls entirely; 93% of Ontarians are paying less in overall taxes.

Your tax proposal is regressive, it's costly, and it harms the environment. For that reason, we on this side of the House will likely not be supporting your bill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, their plan has led to loss of jobs, lack of growth and a lack of consumer confidence. I'd say it's not working.

Families are the ones that need a desperate break here. The growing cost of living is driving families into debt and it's dragging down Ontario's economy.

The minister says that we cannot afford to help. They're not prepared to help those people.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Maybe this other member would like to rise and ask the question, Speaker.

The minister says that they can't afford over there to help everyday families, notwithstanding the fact that it's everyday families that are feeling the pinch. I would like to know why this minister, why this Deputy Premier has not agreed to have the Auditor General take a today look at his books and a today look at what's happening, so that we can all get an idea of what the Auditor General thinks today.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, what the leader of the third party is proposing that we do with their bill this afternoon is: For her member from Essex, she proposes to raise taxes on greenhouses, which are an important employer in his community. For the members from northern Ontario, she wants to raise taxes on veterinarians for employers in their community. For her members from downtown Toronto, she wants to raise taxes on butchers, on bakeries, on restaurants. Mr. Speaker, she

wants to raise taxes on bookstores. For members from the Niagara region, she wants to raise taxes on grape growers.

These people create jobs. These people are part of a tax plan for jobs and growth that is the right response to our economic circumstances. It's balanced; it's fair. We're not going to support a regressive tax cut for wealthier Ontarians. It will harm the environment. We're sticking with the plan, Mr. Speaker. It's the right plan for the future of Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the government keeps telling us that there is no revenue to help families, that they simply cannot help families; but billions and billions of dollars are available for corporate tax giveaways, billions of dollars are available for hikes to CEO salaries and billions of dollars are available to move private power plants to help get votes for Liberals.

Speaker, it's families that need a break. It's families that need a break right now here in Ontario. Why does the minister always find money for his misplaced priorities and tell families that they simply have to wait?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Ontario child benefit, \$1.3 billion, is a misplaced priority. She voted against it. I don't think the Ontario clean energy benefit, which lowers everybody's electricity bill by more than she proposes to, is wrong or a bad priority. We think it's the right priority.

1100

Our choice, as we outlined in the election and outlined yesterday, is to create a healthy homes tax credit to help keep our seniors in their homes longer. That has three benefits. Number one: It helps sustain some \$800 million a year in economic activity. Number two: It lowers taxes for seniors and their families. Number three: It helps sustain 10,000 jobs and takes pressure off of future expenditure increases.

That's enlightened public policy. It's about helping people with more modest means and not giving away a tax cut—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock, please.

I've decided that once the leaders have finished asking their questions, I'll make a comment or two if it's necessary. I think today it's necessary.

Again, I remind you of the trend I noticed yesterday, and I noticed it again today. When somebody asks a question, it's relatively quiet. Then, when somebody tries to answer, it gets very loud. I think there needs to be the balance that we've been looking for.

There are some side conversations going on while somebody else is asking a question. I ask that you refrain from doing that, and I'm going to ask for something a little unorthodox: Use your inside voice. You don't have to yell. If you want to make a point, make your point. You don't have to yell.



## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The question is to the finance minister. Your volunteer wage freeze gave a complete pass to those in the Working Families Coalition when everyone else in the non-unionized sector was slapped with a pay freeze. The result was the single largest union drive in Ontario's history since the Great Depression.

Your preferential treatment of the Working Families Coalition is swelling their coffers after a \$9-million attack ad campaign on your behalf. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, Ontario families are losing 100 jobs an hour. Is the reason that you will not support our call for a mandatory wage freeze for all public sector employees because the Working Families Coalition won't let you?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** My recollection, Mr. Speaker, is that the Chief Electoral Officer found there was no connection between this government and the Working Families Coalition. We've said that in here before.

What I think we have to have—let's take, again, an example of how the Conservatives are simply taking things out of context. She took last month's job numbers, which were bad—they were bad throughout North America—and then took a different divider and produced what is essentially an inaccurate number.

What we have seen since the downturn, Mr. Speaker—what we've seen, frankly, since this government has taken office—is hundreds of thousands of net new jobs. We have passed the employment levels that were present before the downturn. That's been verified by people outside.

That is not to suggest that there is not a huge challenge on jobs. That remains our priority. One of the things we proposed yesterday is this new tax credit, which will help sustain an additional 10,000 jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. To Ontario families it seems perfectly reasonable to ask all of us, not just some of us, in the public sector to forgo a pay raise at a time when Ontario families are suffering. We are losing 100 jobs an hour in this province. United States President Barack Obama, UK Prime Minister David Cameron and the Liberal Premiers of British Columbia as well as Quebec agree with us. The only ones who don't seem to get it are this Premier and this finance minister.

The question then becomes why. Is there a connection between your refusal to enact a government-wide wage freeze for all public sector employees and the \$9-million smear campaign that Working Families ran in the last election?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There is a line everyone walks, and this one was close. I would ask the member to be very careful in the future. Quite frankly, I will be quicker to have somebody miss their supplementary, if that does indeed happen again.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House would prefer to set aside these politics of division. We have difficult decisions ahead of us, which

requires, obviously, an impassioned debate, but a debate that is important about the future of Ontario.

The louder you yell is not going to shrink the deficit. The louder you yell is not going to put more kids in schools. The louder you yell is not going to open another emergency room.

We have the opportunity as a Legislature to work together. We will obviously work with both opposition parties. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, we don't want to force an election right now. We just had one six or seven weeks ago.

I implore the leader of the second party and his caucus: Let's start yelling about the things that are important: how we're going to get back to balance, how we're going to ensure that we continue to have the best schools and health care out—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK  
AND FISCAL REVIEW

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** A question to the Minister of Finance: Yesterday's economic outlook puts Ontario's growth at a paltry 1.8% in 2011 and 2012, as opposed to the previous estimates of 2.7% and 2.5%, respectively. This means revenues will be \$1.3 billion lower than estimated in the Liberals' September election platform.

I ask myself: How could the numbers change so dramatically in only a matter of months? Is it possible that the Liberal platform revenue numbers were just a little inflated?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I thank the member for his question. He's a pretty thoughtful and intelligent guy. He knows how we set our growth estimates. At the time of the budget, we took the consensus estimate of 13 leading economists and set ours 0.2 points below that. Those economists continued to raise their projections, right up until September. It's all well documented publicly. They started to bring them down in September. The consensus is now 2.0% among the economists, and out of an abundance of caution in the fall statement, we set that growth estimate at 1.8%. That has been how successive governments have chosen to approach these important assumptions.

As I say, we have to rely on the best evidence available as we move forward. We've done the prudent thing. I look forward to working with the member and his colleagues as we move forward—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Revenues are \$443 million less than predicted in the budget, mostly because of lower personal income tax collected. And last month's grim employment numbers suggest personal income tax revenues will continue to lag behind previous projections.

New Democrats believe Ontarians deserve an explanation. How could this government be so far off in its projections in such a short period of time?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This is happening to governments right across the country, including the federal government, and in the United States. Private sector economists were very clearly projecting much more robust growth in the spring than they are now. Virtually every government in the country has reduced their projections.

Again, we base our projections on the consensus estimate of 13 leading economists. Sometimes it is remarkably accurate. We're in a much more volatile world. The member opposite, I know, follows events in Europe closely, in the United States, in China and in Japan. Just two days ago, third-quarter US GDP was down-stated. That has an enormous impact, for instance, on the forestry industry in northern Ontario.

These are always difficult, but that is the reality we're faced with. I know we can work together to find very reasonable solutions for dealing with this as we move forward.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Speaker, the global economy is in a fragile state. Economic and fiscal concerns in Europe and the United States are making the news daily, and Ontarians are justifiably trying to understand what this era of uncertainty means for them and their families. Our government was re-elected to provide Ontarians with a stable government capable of managing us through this period of uncertainty.

1110

Ontario is fierce in global competition for jobs and investment. Recent job numbers and economic forecasts have demonstrated that we are truly not isolated from the impact of the global economy.

My constituents and everyone are asking what our government is doing to build a strong economy during these turbulent times.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let me begin by congratulating the member for Pickering-Scarborough East on her election. I know she will be another strong voice for Scarborough and Pickering here in this Legislature.

As our throne speech reiterated earlier this week, this government's top priority is jobs and the economy. Building a strong economy starts with the fundamentals, and there are few places, if any in the world, that have done more to build those fundamentals than right here in Ontario. Our investments in health care, education and training have created a world-class workforce. Our investments have helped build a competitive infrastructure system in Ontario—crucial to economic growth. We've improved the tax environment in Ontario, going from the back of the pack to one of the most competitive in all the world.

There is a fierce battle happening around the world for investment and jobs, and Ontario is poised to win that battle.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Those steps are good. We've moved Ontario in the right direction, and we will certainly strengthen our economy.

A familiar issue, though, that we hear about is the challenge that businesses, particularly small businesses, face in navigating through the government regulatory requirements that they have to address to do business here. That means reducing duplicate and unnecessary regulations and working closer with other levels of government and even other jurisdictions to improve the business climate here in Ontario.

What specific steps is the government taking to work with businesses and to make the relationship with government easier to navigate while still protecting the health and safety of Ontarians as well as our environment?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Through Open for Business, we're creating faster, smarter and streamlined government-to-business services and regulations that make Ontario more attractive for business development while protecting the public interest, which is also very, very critical.

We've reduced the regulatory burden on businesses and stakeholders by over 17%. That represents a reduction of over 80,000 regulatory requirements. We've improved the environmental approvals process, ensuring that the environment and the public are protected, while making the process clearer for businesses to navigate. In consultation with industry, we've made over 100 time- and cost-saving amendments to existing legislation across 10 ministries through our Open for Business Act.

We've come a long way, but clearly we can and must do more. I look forward to working with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Etobicoke Centre, in finding ways to take our successful Open for Business initiative to the next level, and I'm looking forward to getting to that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, we heard yesterday that the deficit has gone from \$14 billion last year to \$16 billion projected for this year. Minister, you actually collected almost \$2 billion more in revenue this year than last, but you spent it all, and that's your problem. Yet you still say that you're moving towards a balanced budget by 2017-18. Everyone knows that when you run at a loss one year and increase that loss in the following year, it's a bit of a stretch to project a balanced budget at any time in the near future.



Minister, who do you think is going to believe the figures that you present in your fudge-it budget?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, in the 2010 budget, we laid out a path back to balance that takes us to 2017-18. That was a requirement of the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, which we had to implement because the government that he was part of, in fact, hid a \$5-billion deficit.

In that plan, we said last year's deficit would be higher than it turned out to be. We had some one-time events that helped bring last year's down, so we did do better last year than had been anticipated.

Right now we are on target to—in that 2010 budget and in that plan, which we did not amend last year, we project a deficit for this year of \$16.3 billion. It is in fact tracking to \$16 billion.

Moving forward, there are real challenges to meeting those targets, but we have no choice but to meet them. I look forward to working with the opposition to meet those targets and to balance—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Only the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government could pat itself on the back and applaud a \$16-billion deficit because it isn't a \$16.3-billion deficit. But you simply moved \$500 million from column A into column B by playing with numbers so that you could make the deficit appear to be improving.

Would the minister confirm to this House that on an apples-to-apples basis, this year's deficit will actually be greater than even his own original projections?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No. No, Mr. Speaker, I won't.

The member is accurate: In every budget, governments—by the way, of all political stripes, across all governments—have contingency funds and reserve funds. They set them up precisely for this reason, because projections are inherently wrong sometimes. There are unanticipated challenges—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues opposite who were here in 2003 will remember the SARS crisis. The government of the day responded extremely well to that. There was an unanticipated expenditure; that government had built in appropriate reserve and contingency. We had an unusually high number of forest fires this year in Ontario. Those are very difficult to predict, so it is quite reasonable, quite responsible, to set up reserve and contingency.

We do use those funds up. We do use them to offset things like unanticipated declines in revenue. Some years, they work to your advantage.

We'll continue to do that. We'll continue to move towards a balanced budget, and I hope we can all work together—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Premier. Later today, members in this House will be voting on my bill to take the unfair HST off of home heating. There are members on the government benches who would undoubtedly support this bill, provided they were free to do so. Has the Premier's office been giving instructions to MPPs on how to vote?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I will personally be here to vote against that bill, because it's wrong tax policy.

The member opposite proposes to raise taxes on a number of important companies in his riding, companies that are struggling to create jobs. I remind the member opposite that we created the Ontario clean energy benefit, which takes 10% off of electricity bills for those people who heat by electricity in rural northern Ontario. That is a substantial portion of the population.

The price of natural gas and natural gas bills have come down dramatically in the last three or four years because of the discovery of shale gas.

I would much rather not raise the taxes on every bakery and restaurant in Algoma-Manitoulin. I would much rather keep those funds in the provincial treasury to help invest in better health care in Algoma-Manitoulin, to help invest in better schools in Algoma-Manitoulin, to help lessen the abhorrent condition of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, MPPs were elected to stand up for their constituents, not the Premier's office.

There is support from MPPs on all sides of this House to take the HST off of home heating, including on the government side. Just last week, the member from Niagara Falls said he'd support this bill.

Will the Premier's office be forcing Liberal MPPs to vote against my bill? Will the Acting Premier guarantee a free vote?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, it'll be interesting to see if there's a free vote in the NDP caucus.

I say to my colleague opposite—I in fact said publicly during the election and I said before the election that I would not support this. I remain steadfast in that position. I was elected—my colleagues agreed with our tax plan for jobs and growth. All members will vote the way they will, I suspect, except probably for the NDP caucus, who obviously have a heavy whip on this vote.

1120

I plead with the member opposite: Don't raise taxes on the farms in your riding. Don't raise taxes on the restaurants and the businesses that are creating jobs in your riding, which is struggling with a high rate of unemployment. This will harm the environment.

I would like to know how the member for Toronto-Danforth can stand up against his former colleagues at Greenpeace and people like David Suzuki and others. We will have—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### POWER PLANT

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. During the recent provincial election, our party and the PC Party had different views on many issues, but there was one issue we both agreed on: re-locating the Mississauga gas plant. Our party committed to relocating it and the Leader of the Opposition supported our decision. In fact, days before the election, when the media asked the Leader of the Opposition if he would scrap the Mississauga plant were he to form a government, he replied, "That's right. Done, done, done, done." So I'm pleased to report that our government is honouring its commitment. The company building the gas plant has agreed to permanently stop construction—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** —immediately and begin discussions to relocate. Promise made; promise kept.

Can the Minister of Energy please explain what this agreement means for the residents of Mississauga and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Thank you very much, and congratulations to the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville for her hard work and her election.

It's already clear, as it was on this issue, as it will be on so many others, that she is going to stand up for the people she represents. She and this government made a clear commitment to the residents of Mississauga and Etobicoke: "There will not be a gas plant on this site." And I was delighted when the Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield South agreed that construction would stop. There will not be a gas plant on this site, and they are working now on the details of the relocation of that gas generating facility—exactly what we said to the residents of Mississauga and Etobicoke.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Minister, for sharing that with this House. Clearly, the concerns of my constituents and community were heard.

Minister, in your answer you said that discussions are under way between the Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield to find a new location for the natural gas plant. However, many of my constituents are concerned that the relocation of the site will be picked at random and might end up even closer to where they live. Can the Minister of Energy state what is being done to ensure that the new location of the natural gas plant is selected with the community in mind?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Speaker, that's a really good question, that is a very good question, and it's been apparent that the guidelines that were once thought to be appropriate for siting these gas generating facilities, which are important enormously important to the residents of these communities and others, could be strengthened, so what we're doing right now is taking a look at

the approach in other jurisdictions throughout North America to see what approach they have brought to combine the best science, the best power judgments and the input of residents to make sure that as we locate, as we choose from sites, we have the strongest possible approach always to ensure that we have reliable and safe, clean power that supports jobs in our communities and is affordable in our communities, where they need it, as they need it, when they need it.

### RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. As you know, there are over 500,000 job-killing regulations currently on the books here in Ontario, and in October alone over 75,000 full-time jobs were lost. In fact, seven out of 10 jobs being lost across Canada are being lost right here in Ontario.

My riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, and indeed most of southwestern Ontario, has been hard hit with ongoing plant closures and job losses. Please tell me, will your government continue to lay the blame at the feet of others, or will you take a look in the mirror, accept responsibility, and free job creators so that they can create jobs and grow our economy?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I welcome the member to this Legislature and I thank him for the question.

He does touch on what is a very important topic. In fact, in our throne speech earlier this week there's no question that jobs and economic growth are our number one priority. Mr. Speaker, we have worked tirelessly to put the fundamentals in place to make Ontario one of the best places in the world to invest and one of the best places in the world to create jobs. But the party opposite has voted against just about everything we've done to put those strong fundamentals in place. They voted against our tax reform which made Ontario one of the best places to invest in the world. They voted against our efforts to improve our education system, our health care system, providing one of the most progressive, one of the most skilled, and one of the most educated workforces in the world.

I look forward to the member opposite thinking long and hard about these issues, and perhaps in the future, maybe in this minority Parliament, we'll have a little bit more co-operation from the party opposite when it comes to building—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Mr. Speaker, I may be new to this House but I'm quickly learning that answers from this government are hard to come by. So let me try again.

As you know, under the McGuinty government, small businesses face the worst regulatory burden in the country. I can tell you, coming from a small business background, that this is absolutely true.

During the recent election campaign, I told constituents that if I didn't deliver on my election promises to



reduce government red tape by 30%, my paycheque would be docked. Are you willing to put your money where your mouth is and offer to take a reduction in pay if you are unable to reduce the regulatory burden on Ontario businesses?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the member for his question and I really do appreciate his passion for supporting our Open for Business initiatives. We've reduced the regulatory burden on businesses by 17%. That represents 80,000 regulatory requirements that have been gone.

But we know and we plan to move further when it comes to moving our Open for Business to the next level. I'll be working with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Etobicoke Centre. I strongly recommend to the member opposite, if he has constructive ideas about how we can reduce the burden on business, to bring them directly to myself or to my parliamentary assistant. We welcome their input. This is something we can do together, but those ideas must be constructive, realistic, and not contrary to the public interest, to the environment—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. According to the Ministry of Health, Speaker, children are waiting hundreds of days more than they should for surgery at Hamilton Health Sciences. The McMaster site, in fact, was converted to primarily focus on children.

What explanation does the government have for parents waiting as long as a year, or in some cases more, for their children to have needed surgery?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It is good to see the leader of the third party standing up for that hospital that she had so attacked in the election.

We on this side of the House found those numbers very challenging, and I acknowledge the real issue with pediatric services there. I would remind the member that prior to us coming to office we didn't even count wait times; now we do. We know where we're not meeting standards.

1130

I concur with her that there's more work to do there. I know the Minister of Health, who is ably representing Ontario at the provincial health ministers' meeting today, is well advised on this issue. I look forward to working with you and the other members from Hamilton as we move to address these very serious challenges.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Children and their families are waiting 421 days for jaw surgery, 324 days for kidney operations and 282 days for reconstructive surgery. The maximum wait for children's surgery should be 182 days. Now, the chief of surgery says that it's the result of funding reductions, and I quote: "There has been a contraction in that envelope in the last couple of years."

The Ministry of Health promised changes that would make services better for kids in Hamilton. Why are children still waiting for over a year for their needed surgeries in that community?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I concur with the member that there's obviously a challenge there. I would like to remind her, however, that because of restructuring that we did we now actually have a children's centre in Hamilton, which is important. I concur fully with her that the challenges being experienced there are not acceptable. The Minister of Health, I know, is working on this issue.

I would remind the member that I would much rather take the \$350 million she proposes in a tax cut and use that money on children's pediatric services, Mr. Speaker. I'd invite her to rethink her priorities because in this day and age you can't have it both ways. You've got to find the right balance. I will err on the side of children's pediatric services and be consistent throughout question period and not say one thing about cutting revenues, spend more money and eventually drive Ontario's economy down. We're about building it up. I look forward to working with her on children's pediatric services in Hamilton and across the province.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, I get a lot of telephone calls and letters from constituents asking me to advocate on their behalf on a whole host of issues, but one of the most troublesome that I get is the large number of complaints having to do with outstanding employment standards claims for unpaid wages and the length of time it takes to process them in your ministry. There is a backlog there.

My constituents have got bills to pay. They're frustrated. They want to get on with their lives. They want their back wages in their pocket. I'm told that there is a backlog there, that your ministry is working on the backlog, but Minister, what are you actually doing to tackle that backlog?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I want to thank the member from Willowdale for the question. Over the last several years, my ministry has definitely seen a substantial increase in the number of claims it receives. In fact, last year it received about 17,000 claims. The volume unfortunately resulted in increased wait times over the years and it did create a backlog in the claims processing system.

However, I have significant progress that I can share with this House. In 2010 we invested an additional \$6 million, and I'm pleased to report that that investment helped us tackle that backlog. We're ahead of schedule; we've eliminated the backlog five months early.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff in the Ministry of Labour for their hard work to make this possible. We continue to work hard to make improvements, to make adjustments, because my ministry cares deeply and works hard to ensure that Ontario workers' rights are protected.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Minister. I'm glad that you're taking some aggressive action to tackle this backlog issue. But my constituents are smart. They know that you're tackling the backlog, but their real question now is, what are we doing to make sure that this tackling exercise is not just a quick fix? What about long-term solutions?

Can you tell me what the ministry is doing to ensure that the backlog does not reoccur and that the backlog, once down, stays down, that we have more than just a quick fix here?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** We are committed to keeping the backlog at bay. We're going to be vigilant to ensure that it doesn't balloon again. To that end, we've worked hard over the last several months to modernize our employment standards program.

Here's a snapshot of some of the initiatives and actions we've taken. We have a two-step investigation process where claims are streamed for early resolution and parties are given an opportunity to resolve the issue. We've increased outreach, education, enforcement and prosecution. We've also introduced a number of online tools that are going to help employers and employees better understand the act, which helps us resolve the claims faster. About 450,000 people have used these tools since they were launched.

In short, we're reducing the number of claims by increasing awareness and reaching out to employers and employees. We will continue to work on behalf of Ontario employees to ensure that their employment standards rights are protected.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, congratulations on your election.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm assuming you'll grant me the appropriate time for my question.

In Tuesday's throne speech, the government stated that Ontario families "need to know that their government is there for them." The residents and business community of York region will be interested to know if that commitment extends to them as they struggle with the personal and economic hardships of a transit strike that is now in its fifth week in York region and far from any sense of a resolution.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** To which minister, please?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** This is to the Deputy Premier.

Seniors can't get to medical appointments, students can't get to classes, and jobs are being lost.

I ask the Deputy Premier, can the residents and the business community of York region count on him and his government to support the back-to-work legislation that will be voted on this afternoon?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm certainly sympathetic to the York region residents who have been affected by this work stoppage. We understand that transit strikes are inconvenient to residents who need to get to work, school and medical appointments.

As a government, we believe in collective bargaining. We encourage the employer and the employees of the union to return to the table. We share the same desire that the member does to get back to the table and to have our transit service up and running again.

In fact, in the early weeks I reached out to the members from Thornhill, York–Simcoe and Newmarket–Aurora to offer my assistance. We have mediators that are standing by. They're very successful, and I would encourage the parties to get back to the table.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, it took this government less than 48 hours to pass back-to-work legislation when the TTC was on strike here in the city of Toronto. Earlier this year, this government—the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Labour included—voted for Bill 150, which ensured that fair negotiations and a settlement would take place and would ensure that no future disruption of transit services would take place in the city of Toronto. The people of York region—the residents and business community—deserve nothing less.

I would like to know once again from the Deputy Premier, from the Minister of Labour, will she agree, will this government agree, to treat York region's residents and business community with the same fairness and consideration as they treat the city of Toronto and pass that legislation when it's voted on in this House later this afternoon?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Certainly, for the sake of the community and the families who rely on York transit, we urge the parties to come back to the table. I believe all parties around the table want those parties to come back to have the conversation, and that's why our Ministry of Labour negotiators, our mediators, are available. They have a good track record. They usually help get these issues resolved. We want to make sure that happens. We understand that the York dispute is an inconvenience; we're very sympathetic. Again, we offer our assistance. Our mediators are standing by. They want to be helpful. For the sake of the community and the families who rely on the transit, we urge the parties to get back to the table. Certainly, we want to make that happen, and our services are available at any time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House is in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.*

#### ESTIMATES

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I have a message from the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by his own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March



31, 2012, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly—Toronto, November 23, 2011.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's my great privilege to take this opportunity to welcome to Queen's Park some very special guests who are in attendance today to support the introduction of the Ontario One Call Act.

In the west members' gallery, from the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance, is Jim Douglas; from Avertex Utility, Bob McKee; from the city of Toronto, Gord MacMillan; from Union Gas, Matthew Gibson, Paul Ungerman, Laura Whitwham, Chris Chetley, Peter Koepfgen, Octavian Ghiricociu and Joe McCartney; and from Enbridge, Matthew Jackson, Sean Bolan, Grant Kilpatrick, Greg Knopinski and Ophir Wainer. Thank you, and welcome.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BRENT McKAGUE

TAMMY FISCHER

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I rise today to congratulate and recognize two outstanding individuals and award winners from my riding of Huron–Bruce. Actually, they're from my hometown of Teeswater as well, so we have a theme going here today.

Last Friday, Brent McKague, better known to his family and friends as "Chief," was awarded the Junior Manufacturer of the Year Award at the 2011 Huron Manufacturing Excellence Awards.

Brent graduated from Fanshawe College with a degree in mechanical engineering technology. Since Brent joined R&R Machine and Tool Inc., the company has been able to use his expertise to develop a progressive die that his company was able to manufacture for Andex Metal Products.

Brent was happy to return home and work for a small business in rural Ontario where he grew up. Incidentally, some of you may have visited his home farm, as the McKague family hosted the 2008 International Plowing Match.

Secondly, Tammy Fischer was named winner of the Canadian Young Speakers for Agriculture at this year's Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. Tammy won first place in the senior competition for her speech outlining the top five facts about farming that every Canadian should know.

I want to recognize both Tammy and Brent as community leaders. They are the future of our manufacturing and agriculture sectors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## SECOND CHANCE PET NETWORK

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I rise today to recognize Second Chance Pet Network, a regional animal welfare

organization that provides outstanding services to many communities throughout my riding of Kenora–Rainy River.

Second Chance was founded in 2009. With no animal rescue organizations servicing many of the communities in my riding, the volunteers throughout the district came together to find a solution. Within months, they had already spearheaded a progressive trap, spay and neuter program for feral cats, offered low-cost spay and neuter programs, and created a pet food bank to help low-income families with pets, while offering adoption services out of a pet supply store before they were able to finance their own storefront location. Volunteers even took over municipal pet adoption duties to help improve the coordination of animal control and adoption services.

Earlier this year, Second Chance broke ground on a permanent building, using donations and corporate grants to create a permanent solution to these issues.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them for their efforts and offer my sincere hope that this government will see the value in the work that organizations like Second Chance do, and that the government will soon offer some sustainable funding to help them and other animal welfare service providers across the province so that they can continue to provide these important services.

## ST. JOHN'S REHAB HOSPITAL

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Speaker, I am happy to rise to tell you about something that's happening in Willowdale at St. John's Rehab Hospital. The hospital has been in existence since 1937. It was founded by the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine. The hospital has pioneered an important level of care as the first hospital in the GTA to specialize in rehabilitation.

In particular, on November 3 I was there with Minister Matthews, and we celebrated the grand opening of the John C. and Sally Horsfall Eaton Centre for Ambulatory Care. The province contributed \$35 million. Mrs. Eaton contributed \$5 million to the project and for ongoing research in the field of rehabilitation.

The hospital continues to respond to the needs of the community. It has become important in the future of our health care here in Ontario. It does rehabilitation work with patients suffering from strokes, cancer, cardiac arrest and a host of other issues.

I want to say a very sincere thank you to everybody who participated in getting this project up and running, especially the private donors. It is a recognition of the importance of St. John's in our health care system in Ontario. It's one of the jewels in the crown of my riding of Willowdale.

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** The one beside it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, the other guy.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Yes. I'm looking at the wrong one. Elgin-Middlesex.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election, and congratulations to the members on re-election and election.

I'm proud to serve the residents of Elgin–Middlesex–London. On their behalf, I take exception to how the government is portraying the auto sector. This government would lead you to believe that the auto sector is strong and growing. It's simply not true. Three factories in my riding have closed in the last two years—two in the last month. Sterling, Ford and Lear, which alone contributed 6,000 jobs at their peak, have now left our local economy. These are not examples of a strong, growing auto sector. These effects ripple through local economies. The closure of Ford alone has taken away 25% of the tax assessment of the municipality of Southwold.

We need the government to take off their rose-coloured glasses and see the real, true picture of how their economic policies are hurting rural Ontario. The auto sector is failing. The government is failing rural Ontario, and the government is failing the residents of Elgin–Middlesex–London.

#### EVENTS IN TIBET

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to extend my congratulations to you and to all the members of the House who have been re-elected.

I stand today to bring your attention to an appalling human tragedy. I sent out a letter to all members about the situation in Tibet on behalf of the Ontario Parliamentary Friends of Tibet, which is a sister organization of the Parliamentary Friends of Tibet in Ottawa.

Since March, 11 young Tibetans in Tibet have self-immolated—set themselves on fire—nine in the last month, and at least six have died, including two nuns.

This grows out of the increasing repression against Tibetans and particularly against a monastery, one of the largest, called Kirti Monastery, in Ngaba. I ask that all members go to the website and sign a petition.

1310

So far in the last three weeks, 600,000 people around the world have signed this petition, standing along with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to call for an end to this repression of religion, particularly the Buddhist religion, in Tibet and of Tibetans generally, many of whom have been incarcerated. Many seniors have been beaten to death. The deaths continue, and the world isn't watching. We want the world to watch. We want the world to know.

It has been said that unless you stand with the oppressed, you stand with the oppressor. Here's a chance for every member in this House to stand with the oppressed, to stand up and ask for our national governments to do the same, to stand for human rights and to say so loudly and proudly on behalf of those who are not getting a voice.

This is spreading. There are another 40 Tibetans waiting to self-immolate as we speak. The deaths will continue until we, as citizens in a democracy, do something about it.

I urge you: Please go to [standupfortibet.org](http://standupfortibet.org), sign your name, get involved, get active. I also invite you all to join the Ontario Parliamentary Friends of Tibet.

#### DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** November is Diabetes Awareness Month and November 14 is World Diabetes Day.

Ninety years ago, Canada gave the life-saving gift of insulin to the world. World Diabetes Day, especially this year, is an opportunity for Canadians to come together and celebrate this important discovery. Today 1,169,000 people in Ontario have been diagnosed with either type 1 or type 2 diabetes, representing approximately 8.3% of the population. This number is expected to continue to grow, resulting in not only a personal crisis for people with the disease but also a tremendous financial burden on the Ontario health care system and our economy. By ensuring that people with diabetes receive the support they need to manage their illness, we are ensuring a sustainable future for all Ontarians.

I ask the members of this Legislature to join me in commemorating national Diabetes Awareness Month and World Diabetes Day.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Mr. Speaker, congratulations to you on your being the Speaker.

I want to send a message. The people of York region who depend on public transit have one message for this government: They have had enough of the transit strike and they want it to end. They have had enough of being victims without anyone listening to them. They have had enough of taking cabs to get to work, missing appointments and, for some, missing school.

They want someone to listen. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that our party is listening and we are acting. I am very proud that my friend and colleague the member for Thornhill has introduced a bill to end this strike through arbitration and to make transit in York region an essential service just like this government did for Toronto, because our constituents deserve the same consideration and the same respect as people in the city of Toronto.

I wonder if the Liberal members from York region will stand up for their constituents and vote to end the strike. Will they speak out for the thousands of people in their ridings who depend on transit, or will they remain the silent four?

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Mr. Speaker, all residents of Ajax and Pickering congratulate you and every person elected to this special House who are here.



Generations of Ontarians have worked together in good times and bad to build this great province. But the McGuinty government recognizes that the next generation will face even bigger challenges and, in an increasingly competitive global economy, those jurisdictions that make the smartest investments in education will have the edge.

I'm proud of the commitment our government has shown to prepare our children for this new marketplace of ideas. Since 2003, Ontario's investment in education has grown substantially and our students haven't lost a single teaching hour to labour action. Now more of our students are graduating from high school and more of our students are doing better in reading, writing and mathematics. It's clear that our commitment to education is paying bigger dividends far into the future.

But it takes all Ontarians working together to build a best future workforce. In particular, the contribution made by Ontario teachers is crucial to ensuring our children realize their fullest potential. Teachers have been entrusted with a vital task, and with hard work, dedication and genuine passion, they are preparing our next generation of good citizens and global workers.

A great teacher can inspire students to do great things, and I see an enormous number of great teachers in our province. So I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ontario's teachers for all the work that they do in helping us to secure our province's continued leadership and prosperity.

#### RM AUTO RESTORATION AND RM CLASSIC CARS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I wish to congratulate you on your recent appointment as our Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as every member of this House is aware, the entrepreneurial spirit of Ontario businesses burns strong, despite continued neglect by their government.

I rise today to pay tribute to a business that has proudly bucked the trend that has plagued far too many Ontario automobile businesses, to become a world-renowned leader in the automotive field.

RM Auto Restoration and RM Classic Cars is a company headquartered in my riding, Chatham-Kent-Essex, with a strong 35-year history of providing the highest-quality automobiles to customers around the world—that includes Jay Leno, by the way—and continuing to offer quality employment here in Ontario.

Founded as a small, single-car garage in 1976, this small business has grown into the world's largest auction house for quality automobiles. RM proudly holds four of the top five all-time records for motor cars sold at auctions, and year after year, RM Auto Restoration's work garners international awards and accolades across the globe.

Owners Rob Myers, Mike Fairbairn and Dan Warrener are solid corporate citizens who are using their business

success to revitalize the downtown core of Chatham. Earlier this month, they were recognized by the Chatham-Kent Community Foundation for their outstanding contributions to the community.

Mr. Speaker, as a business owner myself, I understand how difficult it is to be an entrepreneur in Ontario today. I want to offer my congratulations to these outstanding entrepreneurs and pillars of the community from my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege: Today, private members' business will be debated, and many of those bills may pass second reading today. However, those movers will be asked to refer a bill to a committee that has not yet been duly constituted by this House. Under these conditions, we are in fact demanding the members to make uninformed decisions without the requisite knowledge or legislative approval. This invariably will be detrimental and may prejudice the members in their further discussions on their private members' business. This clearly disadvantages all members of this House.

The introduction of bills without an approved motion to populate the legislative committees, in my view, constitutes a breach of privilege and demonstrates a level of neglect for both the members of the Legislative Assembly and their constituents.

The government appears to not have regard for the importance of having our committees duly constituted in a timely fashion so that members can knowledgeably refer their private members' bills and motions to an appropriate committee at the time of second reading. As of today, the government has not yet brought a motion to populate the legislative committees with members of this House.

One of the things new members are often told upon coming into this Legislature is that much of the work of the Legislature is done not in the House but in committees. Committees are a crucial and essential component of our parliamentary system. Committees are, in fact, due process of the legislative system. Members are not able to do their work nor serve their constituents properly until committees are duly constituted by this House.

1320

Speaker, I understand that in the standing orders the government does have 10 days to constitute those committees. However, this is also a minority government, and unlike in a majority government, where the population of the committees may not be that important at a time when the government is in control of those committees, in a minority Parliament it is indeed fundamental that these committees are populated promptly.

Speaker, due to the urgency of this matter, as members are preparing for second reading of their bills and in the absence of a motion to duly constitute the standing committees of this House, I believe that this matter constitutes a matter of privilege, and I would ask you to rule upon this. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I want to thank the member for submitting the written portion of his discussion for my consideration, so I shall rule. The issue raised by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington has, in fact, been a matter for recent discussion among those around this place who have a role or interest in the business of the House.

First, what the member raises is more appropriately a point of order, not a point of privilege, so I will address it as such. Standing order 108 provides for the appointment of the membership of the committees within the first 10 sessional days of Parliament. Today is, of course, only the fourth day of this new Parliament, and so the member simply does not have a valid point of order.

However, let me address the issue in a little more detail for the member. The committees of this Legislature, and there are nine of them provided for in the standing orders, exist as permanent bodies by virtue of their continuing orders of reference in standing order 108. Without membership, however, the committees are obviously unable to perform any work. As mentioned, though, the House has given itself 10 days to assign members to its committees.

As permanent subordinate bodies of the Legislature, the committees are able to receive referrals of bills and other matters, as the House sees fit to make, whether or not the committee membership has been struck. Indeed, the very structure of the standing orders contemplates that this can happen in that the House can consider business during its first 10 sitting days that could result in a referral to one of its committees. If it does, such a committee is fully eligible to receive business from the House, even without presently having members assigned to it at this time. Its members, once appointed, will simply inherit the agenda items that preceded them to the committee.

As the member has pointed out, this could even happen today in private members' business. I would point out that in fact this has already happened today. A few moments ago, the Minister of Finance tabled the 2011-12 estimates. Upon being tabled, they have been referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates by virtue of standing order 59. This is perfectly in order, as would be the scenario that the member has raised.

I thank the member for his presentation.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### YORK REGION TRANSIT LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL AU SEIN DES SERVICES DE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN DE LA RÉGION DE YORK

Mr. Shurman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York / Projet de loi 7, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des entreprises qui fournissent des services de transport en commun dans la municipalité régionale de York.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you, Speaker. This bill, to be debated this afternoon, seeks to end a labour dispute that has gone on for five weeks in York region and to declare transit an essential service in that region.

## ONTARIO ONE CALL ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR ONTARIO ONE CALL

Mr. Bailey moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd. / Projet de loi 8, Loi sur Ontario One Call Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a brief statement.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd first like to recognize the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who is the co-sponsor of this bill.

Ontario One Call is a corporation currently operating in Ontario. Ontario One Call provides information to excavators and homeowners about the location of underground infrastructure.

This act would require that persons or entities specified in the act become members of the corporation and provide information to it. When a member of the corporation receives information about a proposed excavation or dig, that member is required to mark the location of its underground infrastructure in the vicinity of the excavation or dig site, or indicate that its infrastructure will not be affected by the excavation or dig. The act would also create offences for failure to comply with the act or regulations under it.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have consent? Agreed.



**Hon. John Milloy:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 71(a), the order for second reading of Bill 7, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York, may be called during consideration of private members' public business today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Agreed? Agreed.

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

#### FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Monsieur le Président, la semaine dernière, les francophones de l'Ontario ont célébré le 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario.

We recall that it was Premier David Peterson and his minister responsible for francophone affairs, Bernard Grandmaître, who, with courage and determination, introduced the final bill defining the framework for the delivery of French-language services by the Ontario government. The French Language Services Act was adopted unanimously on November 18, 1986.

Les trois partis politiques doivent s'en féliciter parce que tous les députés ont su s'élever au-dessus de toute idéologie partisane afin de protéger et promouvoir un plus grand bien. Ces félicitations sont d'autant plus méritées que le contexte politique du temps ne se prêtait pas bien à une telle collaboration. Et je tiens à remercier les députés et ministres qui ont fait l'honneur à la tradition de justice dont l'Ontario est si fier.

1330

Vingt-cinq ans plus tard, nous comprenons tous que, dans une province aussi multiculturelle que la nôtre, nous ne pouvons pas nous réclamer une terre d'accueil sans pratiquer l'équité envers nos propres minorités issues de l'un des peuples fondateurs du Canada.

Bien sûr, la loi est essentielle. On sait maintenant qu'il s'agissait d'un grand début, mais il fallait aussi et surtout transformer les services gouvernementaux en français de manière systémique.

Since 2003, the government has been committed to putting structuring and transformative measures in place within the government and in Ontario society as a whole. For this government, Francophonie is a fundamental component in the province's advancement and economic prosperity in an officially bilingual country.

Le bilan parle par lui-même. Grâce au leadership de notre premier ministre McGuinty, des pas de géant ont été faits en moins de 10 ans. Depuis 2003, la municipalité de Callander et les cités de Brampton et Kingston portent

à 25 le nombre de régions désignées qui offrent des services en français.

We have granted self-governance by and for francophones to TFO, the French-language public television network, that exports its television and multi-media products to other provinces and through international projects. And for the past two years, on September 25, the province's francophones have celebrated their identity and their contribution to Ontario on Franco-Ontarian Day.

Notre gouvernement a élargi la définition de francophone dans le but d'être plus inclusif, et tous et toutes reconnaissent la grande qualité de notre système d'éducation en langue française, de l'élémentaire, en passant par le secondaire, jusqu'au postsecondaire et, avec fierté, j'ajoute la petite enfance, qui est tellement importante pour mon gouvernement.

Je pense qu'il faut, au passage, saluer les anciens premiers ministres John Robarts et Bill Davis, qui ont reconnu l'importance critique d'offrir l'éducation en langue française, et cela bien avant l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français.

On peut également se féliciter pour toutes les réalisations dans les services de santé, surtout que depuis l'an dernier, nous avons de nouvelles entités de planification francophone partout dans la province.

Ne serait-ce que dans mon comté, monsieur le Président, il faut voir l'attrait du système de santé de l'Ontario pour les professionnels de la santé des autres provinces qui veulent venir pratiquer leur profession en Ontario.

A new regulation adopted last June sets stronger guidelines on French-language service delivery by third parties that obtain contracts from the government of Ontario in all areas, including health. When a society attracts professionals, that's when you can talk about real economic prosperity and long-term quality of life.

Le gouvernement a toujours été convaincu qu'il fallait aussi un commissaire aux services en français en Ontario. Certes, il a été nommé plus de 20 ans après l'adoption de la loi, mais il s'agit néanmoins d'une très grande avancée. Le commissaire aux services en français constitue, à mon avis, une nouvelle pièce maîtresse du cheminement des francophones.

As we all heard yesterday, this government has a very focused but progressive agenda for its new mandate. We have recognized the importance of helping our seniors live healthy lives in their own homes and the importance of higher education for Ontarians. In these areas, as in all our efforts, Ontario's francophones will continue to benefit, to prosper and to thrive.

Monsieur le Président, j'invite donc tous et toutes mes collègues députés à célébrer l'unité et la collaboration entourant la Loi sur les services en français, et j'exprime le souhait que ces mêmes valeurs guident notre détermination à travailler ensemble pour un plus grand bien, cette fois-ci celui de la prospérité pour tous les citoyens et citoyennes de l'Ontario. Merci, monsieur le Président.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Merci beaucoup. Responses?

**M. Peter Shurman:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Je suis très heureux, à titre de porte-parole de l'opposition pour les affaires francophones, de me lever dans l'Assemblée aujourd'hui pour rendre hommage aux franco-ontariens et franco-ontariennes pour l'identification du 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français.

C'est nécessaire, de temps en temps, de se souvenir que notre communauté francophone est une des deux nations fondatrices de notre province. En fait, nous avons créé, l'année passée, un jour spécial, soit le 25 septembre, pour commémorer les franco-ontariens et franco-ontariennes, mais ce n'est pas suffisant.

Un drapeau, un jour et une loi sur les services en français, mes chers amis, une nation francophone.

Ici, en Ontario, nous avons pris des initiatives variées pendant les années pour signaler que notre monde francophone est important dans un sens très spécial. Nous devons garder comme spéciale cette importante section de notre grande population ontarienne.

Le drapeau franco-ontarien fut adopté en 1977. C'est symbolique. Je suis très fier d'en avoir un dans mon propre bureau. Mes visiteurs me demandent fréquemment l'origine de ce drapeau et c'est mon plaisir de l'expliquer. Maintenant nous avons, en Ontario, un jour exceptionnel pour élever notre communauté francophone, pour célébrer notre francophonie.

Mais la Loi sur les services en français n'est pas un symbole; c'est un effort actuel pour rendre égales les activités des citoyens en relation avec leur province.

De la part du caucus progressiste-conservateur, j'offre les salutations de notre leader, M. Tim Hudak.

Nous devons reconnaître le rôle spécial qu'occupe la communauté francophone dans l'histoire de notre province. La présence francophone en Ontario date de 400 ans. Ils sont parmi les premiers peuples fondateurs de notre merveilleuse nation, et depuis 25 ans nous avons des protections pour notre communauté francophone avec la Loi sur les services en français.

Pour la majorité du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et au-delà, le Parti PC a contribué à la promotion et à la conservation de l'aspect unique que tient cette communauté en Ontario. Le dynamisme de la communauté francophone que nous voyons aujourd'hui confirme que la langue et la culture française demeurent une partie intégrante et fondamentale de la société ontarienne. Un aspect de cette santé que nous voyons quotidiennement est un résultat des services disponibles en français.

Félicitations, et merci.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Moi aussi, ça me fait extrêmement plaisir de me joindre à mes deux autres collègues pour célébrer le 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français.

Moi, je me souviens très bien de quand cette loi-là a passé. Je me souviens que j'étais physiothérapeute à l'Hôpital Laurentien—ça n'existe plus; ça a un nouveau nom. J'avais trois petits enfants à la maison et j'avais les

cheveux longs. Je me souviens de tout ça. Mais je me souviens surtout que ça avait été une bataille où on a finalement vu un Parlement qui était uni.

Du côté des néo-démocrates, notre appui pour les services en français n'a pas changé. Je suis extrêmement fière de dire que dans mon caucus, présentement, on a près de 50 % des néo-démocrates qui sont soit franco-ontariens ou franco-ontariennes ou qui peuvent s'exprimer en français. C'est quelque chose dont je suis extrêmement fière.

On a parlé aujourd'hui de plusieurs petits pas qui ont été faits pendant les 25 ans depuis la proclamation de la Loi sur les services en français. Je suis fière des petits pas que l'on a faits. Chacun de ces pas nous ramène plus près du but à atteindre. Mais le but à atteindre est encore loin, monsieur le Président. Si on n'est pas capable de se décider à faire des grands pas, est-ce qu'on pourrait au moins faire des petits pas plus rapidement? Peut-être que ça nous amènerait là où on veut aller également plus rapidement.

Je vais vous donner quelques idées. Dans un premier temps, je suis extrêmement fière de notre commissaire aux services en français. M. Boileau, c'était un bon choix; il fait du bon travail. Ses rapports sont pertinents, bien faits et résonnent au son de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Mais pourquoi est-ce qu'il n'a pas le droit de relever de cette Assemblée? Pourquoi, contrairement à tous les autres commissaires de l'Assemblée, lui, il relève d'une ministre déléguée aux services en français? Pourquoi on ne le met pas sur le même pied d'assise que les autres commissaires? Pour moi, ça serait un pas de plus vers les services en français, vers la francophonie.

1340

Un autre point important : il n'y a même pas 50 % des municipalités qui font partie de l'Association des municipalités de langue française de l'Ontario qui ont un plan pour offrir des services en français. Il me semble que comme gouvernement provincial, on pourrait les encourager un petit peu eux-mêmes aussi. Là, on est à 50 %. Ça fait 25 ans qu'on a la Loi sur les services en français. On est prêt à faire plus que ça, non?

Un autre—c'en est un que je n'ai pas digéré et je ne le digérerai probablement jamais—c'est la maternelle à temps plein. Quand le gouvernement a sorti sa maternelle à temps plein, c'était une nouveauté dont personne n'avait jamais entendu parler. Bien voyons donc! Ça faisait 10 ans que tous les conseils francophones dans l'Ontario offraient la maternelle à temps plein. Ils l'avaient développée d'une façon qui était pour et par les francophones et qui fonctionnait. Est-ce qu'on a regardé ça? Pantoute; on a ignoré ce que les francophones avaient fait et puis on a développé un modèle qui ne respectait pas ce que les francophones avaient mis en place. Je peux parler pour ma communauté; le Carrefour francophone a failli faire banqueroute à cause du modèle qui avait été imposé par le gouvernement McGuinty. Ils ont reculé, oui, c'est vrai, après une poussée incroyable de toute la communauté franco-ontarienne qui leur a dit, « Whoa! On n'acceptera pas ça. » Mais ils ont reculé trop tard,



monsieur le Président. Les dommages avaient déjà été faits.

On parle également, pendant qu'on parle de petits pas, de nos conseils scolaires—le financement des conseils scolaires. Je suis extrêmement fière qu'on ait des conseils scolaires francophones. Bravo. Ça a été un pas dans la bonne direction, mais est-ce qu'on ne pourrait pas les financer de façon équitable aux conseils scolaires anglophones? Il me semble que ça aussi, ça améliorerait les services en français.

Parlant d'éducation, quand est-ce qu'on va avoir une université désignée sous la Loi sur les services en français? Petite enfance, c'est bien—le primaire, le secondaire, le collégial. On est dû. On est dû pour avoir de l'éducation universitaire sous la Loi sur les services en français. On n'est pas là encore en Ontario. Comme je vous dis, ce n'est pas souvent des grands pas que je veux; c'est une suite logique des choses. Mais, on ne les a pas faites encore.

Un point extrêmement important—je vois que le temps me manque—c'est la perception. M<sup>me</sup> Linda Cardinal, une professeure de sciences politiques à l'Université d'Ottawa, a étudié la question. Qu'on parle des tribunaux, de la police, des services d'urgence, des cliniques d'aide juridique, des services aux victimes, de la société d'aide à l'enfance, 80 % des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes ne demandent pas leurs services en français parce que s'ils les demandent, ils sont traités de quémandeurs. Ils sont traités de faiseurs de trouble. Ici même à l'Assemblée, ce n'est pas souvent qu'on entend parler français.

Joyeux 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, tout le monde.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Merci beaucoup.

## WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH MOIS DE LA PRÉVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE FAITE AUX FEMMES

**Hon. John Milloy:** I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allocated to each party to speak in recognition of Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have unanimous consent for five minutes for each party? Agreed? Agreed.

Minister of Education.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** And minister responsible for women's issues, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And I thought you would include that in your five-minute speech. That's why—

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you. I'm very pleased to rise today in that regard to recognize November as Woman Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario.

Monsieur le Président, je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour commémorer le mois de novembre, qui est le Mois de la prévention de la violence faite aux femmes en Ontario.

Today we acknowledge the need to continue to work together to prevent violence against women, and we recognize that it is everyone's responsibility to end woman abuse. Woman abuse is insidious; much of it goes unreported. And it can take many forms: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse.

In spite of under-reporting, last year the coroner investigated 22 confirmed cases where women lost their lives to domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely unacceptable.

Il s'agit là d'une situation tout à fait inacceptable. La violence faite aux femmes ne discrimine pas. Il n'existe pas de victime typique.

Woman abuse does not discriminate. There is no typical victim. It crosses every social boundary, society, class, race, ethnicity, age, ability and sexual orientation.

We know that every woman deserves to live her life free of fear and threat of violence, and every child deserves to grow up in a safe, loving home, free of fear of violence. That's why we've invested more than \$208 million every year in programs to protect women from violence and to provide support for victims.

Some of this money has gone towards training over 28,000 front-line workers in communities across Ontario to recognize the signs of domestic violence and support victims. We have also worked with our partners in the community on our domestic violence and sexual violence action plans. These are comprehensive plans that take practical steps to provide supports and resources to tackle these complex issues.

More than 200 communities have participated in our groundbreaking Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign since 2004. We've expanded this program into francophone, aboriginal and newcomer communities to provide culturally and linguistically sensitive training.

November 25 marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Le 25 novembre marque la Journée internationale pour l'élimination de la violence à l'égard des femmes. Demain, la campagne du ruban blanc commence aussi. Il s'agit de la plus grande campagne de sensibilisation du public au monde. Elle réunit des hommes et des femmes qui veulent mettre un terme à la violence faite aux femmes.

Tomorrow also begins the white ribbon campaign, the world's largest public education initiative to bring men and women to end violence against women. I am proud to say the white ribbon campaign started right here in Ontario and is now in over 60 countries worldwide. I want to thank all of my colleagues in the chamber today for wearing the white ribbon as a sign of their commitment to ending domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, our government is working to build strong, healthy communities. To stop domestic violence, we need to end the silence that allows the cycle of abuse to begin and to continue.

I want to thank everyone who works on the front lines and provides support and services across the province to

the survivors of violence. The work you do every day makes a real and concrete difference in the lives of women and their children.

Les femmes, où qu'elles vivent, ont le droit de vivre librement, sans craindre de devenir victimes de violence et d'agression. Les enfants ont le droit de vivre dans des foyers aimants, sans violence ou bouleversements, et les collectivités ont le droit de vivre en paix.

Women everywhere deserve to live lives free from violence and abuse. Children deserve loving homes, free from violence and turmoil. And communities deserve to live in peace. Women and men all across Ontario are united in saying, let's end domestic violence now.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations to you.

I am honoured today to rise on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, to respond to the minister's statement on Woman Abuse Prevention Month. When African women's activist Ubah Hersi spoke at the Haliburton-Kawartha-Pine Ridge District Health Unit a couple of years ago, she said, "Whether it's in Mogadishu, Somalia ... or Lindsay, Ontario, violence against women is a serious and far-reaching issue."

Every second, a woman somewhere in Canada experiences some form of sexual violence. Over 29% of Canadian women have been assaulted by a spouse, with 45% suffering serious physical injury.

Sexual assaults often occur from someone in a position of trust, such as a relative, coach, religious adviser, teacher or employer. Physical abuse carries on into old age, as we are all well aware from the recent news stories, particularly involving long-term-care facilities.

Unfortunately, violence is usually learned from male role models early in life.

1350

Abused women are three times more likely to have male partners who witnessed the abuse of their own mothers. Many prominent women who have experienced abuse are now discussing it as a means of raising awareness and providing role models for other women in similar circumstances.

Last spring, in the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, I was happy to attend a presentation by Arlene Dickinson, the well-known Canadian entrepreneur and CEO; you all know her from Dragons' Den. She was at the Academy Theatre in Lindsay at a fundraiser for women's resources. During her presentation, Ms. Dickinson disclosed that she had been a victim of both emotional and physical abuse, and told the crowd that there was no shame in it. There was a point in her life when she knew she had to break free, and she faced many challenges before finding success.

Violence against women is a tragedy of our society. However, we need to treat the fundamental underlying causes of the disease and not just the symptoms. Keeping silent when we know or suspect abuse is happening to a

friend, a relative, a neighbour or an associate also makes us an accessory.

Domestic and sexual violence will not end until men become part of the solution. Men must take an active role in creating a culture that no longer tolerates violence and discrimination against women and girls.

Today there are more services and shelters available for women in these situations, but we need to raise awareness and foster education. It is a societal problem that is unacceptable in the 21st century.

I want to thank the women who have had the courage to leave those situations, the friends who helped them and the providers in our communities that got them to the next stage.

Mr. Speaker, I have been pleased and honoured today again to have the opportunity to speak to the Legislature on behalf of the PC caucus in support of the minister's statement.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour and privilege always to stand as women's critic, on behalf of the New Democratic Party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, to speak to this important initiative.

Many people here know that I used to be in active duty as a United Church minister full time. What they don't know is that in our church, a large portion of our church came from marginalized communities, many with mental health issues, many with addiction issues, many with prison records.

But I have to say that although hundreds would flock to our sanctuary from those communities, I never felt frightened once, except for one day. One day, on a Saturday afternoon, this young woman, well-heeled, well-educated, came running into the church, chased by her husband. There were programs going on—yoga programs, yoga classes—and children were in the building. She ran into my study. I locked the door. He chased her from room to room, upsetting the entire establishment. There was no time to call the police. Finally, luckily—and it was luck only, Mr. Speaker—when he left, I found her cowering in my office in terror. For a few minutes, I and we got a taste of what she lived with every day of her life.

I want to focus on two initiatives—two positive initiatives—that we all support here in the House. Number one is Ruth's Daughters, launched at Queen's Park two years ago on Mother's Day. Donna Cansfield and Christine Elliott came, along with faith leaders from across Ontario, and we all agreed on one thing: We wanted to see an end to domestic violence. And that happened in this very House.

I want to report, Mr. Speaker, that since that day, we've encouraged all faith traditions to focus one service a year on this issue, and it has happened. There have been two huge masses done by the Roman Catholic church, many services by other denominations and faiths, and many groups have started since then. We look forward to this Mother's Day to commemorate those events.

The second initiative, the White Ribbon Campaign, has already been mentioned. What wasn't mentioned is



that it was started by someone who now belongs to all Canadians—that's our own Jack Layton—and a couple of others who were at a kitchen table. They were men who said, in response to the member from the PC caucus, that men have to do something about this initiative. And now, as you heard, it's in 60 different countries.

Last Sunday in my church, Humbercrest United, the two initiatives met as we did a service for Ruth's Daughters, and the lead speaker was Todd Minerson, the executive director from the White Ribbon Campaign.

When we discussed the service and we set it up, we thought we would have a candle-lighting ceremony at the end of the service to commemorate women who had been lost to members of the community or known to be lost by members of the community, and we discussed how many candles to get. We didn't know if anybody would get up—we're United Church-ers; we're a little reticent—to light a candle, but we bought 25, thinking maybe about 25 people would come forward. Every single person from that congregation got up and walked to the front to light a candle in prayer and remembrance of some woman they knew who had been lost to domestic violence. That's how pervasive the problem is. We ran out of candles, but, Mr. Speaker, we never run out of hope.

I hope that those candles and the light from that service and the light that has been shed here today on this problem is carried forth by every member here into their communities; that they find out about Ruth's Daughters and the White Ribbon Campaign if they don't know much about them and that they carry that light forward so that, in the holiday season we all look forward to, we share with our families a season of peace, a season that is free from domestic violence, and a season, Mr. Speaker and members here, that is safe for all of our sisters.

## PETITIONS

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Congratulations to you, Speaker, on your recent election.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas there are over 300 homes in the area of the proposed UDI Port Ryerse Wind Farm;

"Whereas a precedent has been set by other counties in Ontario for bylaws of increased setbacks of 1,200 to 2,000 metres for the erection of wind turbines in populated areas;

"Whereas property values are decreased by proximity to wind turbines;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reinstate municipal powers to allow Norfolk county to reassess and increase setbacks to

2,000 metres in populated areas, to honour a moratorium on construction until these bylaw adjustments are met, and to reimburse lost property values in this affected community."

I've been to the meetings. I support the petition.

### LYME DISEASE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Leeds–Grenville.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Don't worry, Speaker. You'll get it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm thinking "Senator."

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thanks for the compliment.

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

1400

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" have been available "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access" to the people of northeastern Ontario.

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask page Daniel to bring it to the Clerk.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### HOSPITALS

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario require Premier McGuinty to table, by March 1, 2012, a specific and detailed plan that outlines the current stage of the development process, the timelines for proceeding to any subsequent stage, the deadlines for project completion, and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the hospital expansion projects promised before and during the 2011 Ontario general election.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Leone has moved private member's notice of motion number 1. Pursuant to standing member 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion that I table today addresses the cynicism that currently plagues our democracy. With fewer than 50% of voters choosing to vote in this past election, it is incumbent upon this 40th Parliament to stem the tide of voter discontent.

As I was going from door to door in my riding, I frequently heard from people disappointed by the fact that politicians don't keep their promises, that we are all the same and that nothing will ever change. Our chance for change is today, Mr. Speaker, by supporting this motion.

Ontarians are tired of governments that do not keep the promises they make, and we will hold them to account. That's what the Constitution asks us to do and that's why this House can send a very clear message to Ontarians through its very first private member's ballot item, which I was fortunate enough to draw.

In my riding of Cambridge, there have been several announcements and groundbreaking ceremonies for Cambridge Memorial Hospital, but we are still without a hospital expansion on a project that was supposed to begin in 2005. In fact, right after the 2007 general election, the member for Kitchener Centre participated in a groundbreaking ceremony. At that time, the hospital was scheduled to be completed in 2010. Here we are at

the end of 2011 and there's still no expansion for Cambridge Memorial Hospital. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but no cheque has been forthcoming. There are no cranes, dump trucks or other mighty machines, as my son likes to call them. The people in Cambridge and North Dumfries have been left out.

There's a pattern with this government. Funding announcements keep happening mere weeks before an election—all in an attempt to save or gain seats for this government. They seem to like to dangle emotional infrastructure projects in front of voters, with the hope of better electoral results.

Cambridge is not unique, Mr. Speaker. In fact, in addition to the Cambridge announcement, between April and September 2011, the Ontario Liberal government held about two dozen other hospital expansion project announcements.

It's time for Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal government to come clean and submit to the Legislature a detailed plan that outlines the costs, a timeline for completion and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of the following hospitals: Cambridge Memorial Hospital in the great riding of Cambridge; Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital in Burlington; Brockville General Hospital; Groves Memorial Community Hospital; Hawkesbury and District General Hospital; South Bruce-Grey Health Centre in Kincardine—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I notice the member for Huron-Bruce applauding that, and she's going to have a couple more items on this list—Providence Care in Kingston; Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga; Wingham and District Hospital in north Huron; the University of Ottawa Heart Institute; the Orléans Family Health Hub in Ottawa; St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital in St. Thomas; North York General Hospital in Toronto; Toronto East General Hospital, again in Toronto; West Park Healthcare Centre in Toronto; Toronto Grace Health Care Centre in Toronto; Etobicoke General Hospital, again in Toronto; York Central Hospital in Vaughan; North Wellington Health Care Corp. in north Wellington; Windsor Regional Hospital in Windsor; Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor; and Grey Bruce Health Services in Southampton.

All these hospital expansion projects were promised before or during the 2011 Ontario general election. There are likely more. They were made, in advance of an election, to help save or gain Liberal seats. The member for Huron-Bruce, for example, had three hospital expansion projects in her riding alone.

Funding for an expansion at Cambridge Memorial Hospital is just one example of Dalton McGuinty's many broken promises, and it's time for McGuinty to be held accountable for the promises that he has made in the recent provincial election.

Cambridge is not unique. As we can all see, Mr. Speaker, we have seen far too many instances with this Premier where he makes promises leading up to and



during a campaign and then backs away from them right after. Quite frankly, I remain sceptical and I don't believe the government will follow through with its commitments. Here are just a few reasons why.

First, the province's finances are in terrible shape. We're facing an unprecedented \$16-billion deficit. This is troubling because, rather than doing something about it, like accepting our amendment for a public sector wage freeze, they pat themselves on the back for increasing our deficit by \$2 billion this year.

What's worse is that this government has the habit of taking all the credit and none of the blame when it comes to everything they do. Just listen to all the excuses they listed in the throne speech and repeated in yesterday's economic update. They blamed everything and everyone except themselves for not having enough money to fund our priorities.

Ontarians rightly think this government will conveniently break their promises on hospital expansions because the blame lies somewhere else. In other words, they're setting themselves up to break promises with this blaming rhetoric.

Secondly, the Drummond commission is likely to ask for the Ontario government to curb increases in health spending. This is important to note because, assuming the government indeed has the money to construct these hospitals, with increases in health care funding being reduced, how will they actually operate the facilities they've created?

I have to thank the member for Barrie for highlighting this fact for me, where he and other members on this side of the House met with the hospital administrators in his riding and noted that there is serious concern about the operational costs not being forwarded for their newly built hospital. That's not forthcoming.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government has a history of cancelling half-built infrastructure projects. If they can cancel a half-built power plant in Mississauga, what will stop them from cancelling hospital projects that don't even have a shovel in the ground?

In this motion I am simply asking the government to ensure that these expansion projects, projects which people care deeply about, are not going to be broken again. We're asking the government to tell us what taxes are going to go up and what spending cuts they're willing to make to ensure that Ontarians get the health care they both need and want.

Ontarians, especially residents of Cambridge and North Dumfries and users of Cambridge Memorial Hospital, have come to learn that there's a lot of uncertainty when this government announces funding. We have quickly learned that funding for hospital expansions, no matter how many times they are announced, are never concrete. This is why it is imperative that this motion pass this House. It is time that the Premier is held accountable by the House to ensure that he fulfills the promises he has made. This is why I'm asking my colleagues from all parties to join me in supporting this motion.

1410

It is clear that voters expect their politicians to keep their promises. What isn't clear is how the Premier plans to pay for these projects and how he's going to afford these promises. It's time for the Premier to come clean to Ontarians today and tell voters how he intends to keep his promises, or he must tell voters why he is voting against our hospitals, including Cambridge Memorial.

The government can try to push the blame onto the side of wanting more spending at a time when the province cannot afford it. However, I would just like to remind this House that it was this government that made these hospital expansion promises. All I'm looking for is a clear and detailed plan that outlines the costs, a timeline for completion and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the hospitals that I have previously mentioned.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'd like to remind members that we don't use the personal name of a member; it's "Premier" or "Minister" or the riding name, please. Thank you.

The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and I must say that you look extremely good sitting in that chair, although you don't seem to have the black robe. What happened there?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The tailor is away—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The tailor will be returning. Thank you, member.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I see. Now this is clear.

I would like to echo what has been said by the honourable member. The member for Cambridge asked something that is confronting each and every one of us right now: the frustration that we feel, on this side of the House, anyway, and the frustrations that come when government breaks its promises, when government plays political games on the backs of hopeful communities and citizens of Ontario.

The motion in front of us today asks us to take a moment and consider—really it asks us to add up the many promises that the Liberals made while they were on the campaign trail. While they were hoping for votes, what did they promise? Once you go past the photo ops and the quick campaign stops, the communities are still hoping that those announcements you made in their cities—you know those great big cheques that people hold? They remember those cheques and the amount of money that is written on those great big cheques, and they expect the money to come.

The member from Cambridge wants you to add this up. Bring all those extra-large-size cheques you photocopied with through the campaign and add them up. This is what he's asking you to do. I don't think this is something that difficult to do, and I think this is something that is worthwhile.

There is reason for concern. The Liberal government has been in power for the last eight years. It's not like

they have always delivered on the health care promises they made, and the member from Cambridge is a living example of a promise that was made to him—to his community—that has yet to come true.

Well, we did add up the numbers on those great big plastic cheques that were photo-opped through the campaign—the ones that I and Miriam, our very capable researcher, were able to track down, anyway.

Of course, there's Cambridge Memorial Hospital, their main capital redevelopment project in Cambridge: The big cheque said \$200 million.

Then there's Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital phase 1 redevelopment in Burlington: the big cheque on that one, \$312 million. You all have your BlackBerrys—the part that allows you to add and subtract, the little built-in calculator? You will need a calculator by the time I am done reading these numbers.

There is Brockville General Hospital: the mental health, the complex continuing care unit, as well as the rehab. The big cheque on that one: \$100 million.

Then there's Groves Memorial Community Hospital. That's a replacement hospital in Greenfield. The big cheque for that one: \$136 million.

Then there's L'Hôpital Général de Hawkesbury et District, the hospital redevelopment: \$98 million.

The South Bruce Grey Health Centre—that's their phase 1 emergency department and ambulatory care area in Kincardine. The great big cheque in that one read "\$100 million."

We have Providence Care, the King Street West site redevelopment; that's the one in Kingston. That was a big, big, plastic cheque; "\$350 million" was printed on that one.

Halton Healthcare Services: That's the Milton redevelopment in the town of Milton. We don't have a number on that one, but it talks about a major redevelopment.

Credit Valley Hospital: That's a priority area redevelopment, the expansion in Mississauga. This one also has been promised; numbers to come.

Wingham and District Hospital, the phase 1 redevelopment in north Huron—I didn't pronounce that properly. We have numbers yet to come in the millions of dollars.

Let's go back to the University of Ottawa Heart Institute that my colleagues talked about. Cardiac life support services in Ottawa: The big cheque on that one reads "\$200 million."

The Orleans Family Health Hub in Ottawa: The big cheque was \$60 million.

The Renfrew Victoria Hospital—that's the Renfrew regional dialysis program, a very needed program—is \$12 million.

The St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital redevelopment in St. Thomas—

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Hear, hear.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Absolutely. The big cheque in your community read "\$106 million."

Then there's North York General Hospital. That's the inpatient beds, and that's the one in Toronto. The cheque read "\$15 million."

The Toronto East General Hospital—that's the phase 1 redevelopment—also in Toronto: \$210 million.

You also made announcements on the election trail about West Park Healthcare Centre, the phase 1 redevelopment—no figures were given, but the people are led to believe that millions of dollars are coming their way. You said it during the election.

You did the same thing at Toronto Grace Health Centre. You promised a major redevelopment. People are hoping for millions of dollars.

In Etobicoke's general hospital, the phase 1 redevelopment, you had a big cheque there; "\$200 million" was written on it.

At York Central Hospital, a new hospital in Vaughan, we haven't got the figures, but a promise was made, a promise for a brand new hospital. You can add a lot of zeroes to that.

*Interjection.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And add HST to that, my colleague says.

North Wellington Health Care Corp.—the Louise Marshall Hospital, to be precise: Their emergency and ambulatory care projects in north Wellington—those promises were made on the election trail.

Windsor Regional Hospital, the bridging project in Windsor: The big cheque on that one read "\$60 million."

Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital—that's for their angio-plasty services and ambulatory care expansion in Windsor. The big cheque read "\$80 million."

The Grey Bruce health centre, Southampton site, the emergency department and the laboratory expansion: \$10 million.

The list goes on and on, but I think you get the drift of where I'm going.

So you have people throughout this province who have seen the Liberal government come into their town, either bearing a big cheque or a promise of major capital redevelopment of their health care services in their own community, their own city, and they're expecting you to deliver on it.

What the motion is asking is, did you do the math? Will you do the math? Will you submit to us how much your promises have cost? The people of Ontario deserve nothing less. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member for Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** It's good to see you in the chair. I'm noticing that you're quieter when you're in the chair than when you're seated elsewhere, sir. But we're very pleased that you're in the chair.

1420

I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the motion from the member for Cambridge.

I would actually like to thank both the member from Cambridge and the member from Nickel Belt for going through those catalogues of projects that we are looking



forward to accomplishing. What it brings up is that, in fact, our government did introduce something called the ReNew Ontario plan where we take an actual planned approach to infrastructure, when we actually have a long-term plan for infrastructure investments, not just in health care—although obviously health care is a major part of that—but in other areas as well.

As you have noted, we actually do have plans, real plans, to build 18 new hospitals, and then renovating and major projects at 100 other hospitals. You've mentioned some of the hospitals that I take an interest in: Cambridge Memorial—for those of you who don't come from my particular part of the province, Cambridge is just southwest of Guelph; Groves Memorial, which is in Fergus, just north of Guelph; the hospital in Vaughan—all my ancestors were born in Vaughan so I always take an interest in Vaughan. The list goes on and on. Milton is another neighbour where there's a hospital project committed.

The point here is that we have taken the time to create long-term infrastructure plans, and what we have announced is not just some sort of random sprinkling of largesse but it's as a result of capital submissions to the Ministry of Health, it's as a result of serious preliminary planning that has gone on on all of these projects and it is part of a plan.

In terms of the actual details, the actual content of the motion, the request has been made for information. In fact, all the information about commitment to hospital infrastructure is already online as part of our publicly available long-term infrastructure plan, Building Together. The fact that the member from Nickel Belt was able to find out so much information about the projected costs of the various projects tells you that what I am saying is actually accurate: that the costings are all there, that the costings are all part of the plan that we have laid out and that we know what it adds up to.

When we released the Building Together plan in the spring, we committed to spend \$35 billion on infrastructure over the next three years and to provide some clarity, predictability and accountability to Ontario voters to know what it was that we were committing to. But the thing that's important to note is that that commitment wasn't just something that was on some random plastic cheque at an event; that's something that's in our actual fiscal plan. That infrastructure plan is part of the Ontario budget, part of the fiscal plan of the province of Ontario. Those are projects that we have accounted for, not just in our platform but in the public accounts of the province of Ontario. That's why the information is all there on the Infrastructure Ontario website, because it's part of a plan that has been filed with the government and with the Auditor General, where it isn't just, as I say, random announcements.

When I look at what has happened sometimes with the other parties, it's interesting that there haven't been formal plans like that. Perhaps the cynicism that we're hearing about from parties opposite is based on the way they used to do things. They would run around and make

campaign commitments and not necessarily put those things in. Just in Cambridge—because it's the member from Cambridge who brought the motion—if you look at the history of this project, in 1998 the Conservatives' Health Services Restructuring Commission ordered that this hospital needed to be built. In 2001, the Conservatives said, "Oh, yeah, we're going to build it." In 2003, it was part of the Conservative election campaign. But guess what? The money wasn't in the costing of their platform. So when we arrived and actually looked at the books and the auditor said, "Hey, what, \$5.6 billion"—the money was not in the fiscal plan left behind by the Conservatives. The money for the Cambridge hospital is now in the fiscal plan of the province of Ontario.

But do you know what happened? Do you know what happened, new member from Cambridge, when that fiscal plan, as part of the Ontario budget, came to the floor of this House? Your party voted against the money for the hospital in your riding and for the hospital in Mr. Arnott's riding, the member from Wellington-Halton Hills.

I have to tell you that I want to congratulate the member from Wellington-Halton Hills on the advocacy work that he has done for his hospital over the years. He has been a tremendous advocate for his hospital. He's in my face; he's in the Minister of Health's face; he's in the face of anybody who will listen to him. I mention this because this is in marked contrast to what I experienced from another neighbouring community, where I didn't hear the amount that I heard from the member from Wellington-Halton Hills, who never let me forget that we needed a new hospital in Fergus. I actually happen to agree with him, and I agree that we need a new hospital in Cambridge.

But the message here is that you can't have it both ways, folks. You cannot say, "Let's cancel the HST," and say, "But leave all those hospitals in the fiscal plan." You can't have it both ways. Sorry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the debate today. I'd certainly like to thank and congratulate the newly elected member from Cambridge for bringing this very important resolution forward. I commend him for taking immediate action to protect not only the interests of his constituents but the interests of people throughout the province of Ontario.

The member's resolution calls on the government to provide this House and the people of Ontario with "a specific and detailed plan that outlines the current stage of the development process, the timelines for proceeding to any subsequent stage, the deadlines for project completion, and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the hospital expansion projects promised before and during the 2011 Ontario general election." It requires the government to do something that they have not done ever before, and that is to provide this House with a reasonable time frame of



four months to prepare for the tabling of the plans and the promises they have made. It's time to allow, to the residents of these communities, answers to the question as to how and when these hospitals are going to be built, extended, and how they are going to be paid for.

This resolution is a positive step in the right direction in that it proposes to keep politicians—and this Liberal government, in particular—honest and accountable to the people in the province of Ontario. That's what it needs to do.

In Ontario today, we have a government that, regrettably, has a great proclivity towards making grand announcements with very impressive speeches and photo ops; everybody is invited. We saw this happen 22 separate times prior to the 2011 election campaign, when all of these little promises were made about expansions and the health minister herself went out on a little bit of a whistle-stop tour of Ontario, travelling the province, announcing new hospitals—some of which had been announced several times before—and new expansions, but without giving people any information about the costs, the funding or the timelines. Essentially, they said, "We'll build a hospital. Trust us." The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that you can't trust them. They have broken their promise on too many occasions. Just ask the people of Cambridge. We have had three groundbreakings for that project, and they have broken their word.

1430

In fact, I've got an article with me today from Cambridge Now that was written on October 29, 2007, and the headline reads, "Let the Digging Begin at Cambridge Memorial Hospital. There was Singing and Dancing at CMH Groundbreaking." The article goes on to state, "Cambridge Memorial Hospital will soon be the site of a major operation as it begins construction on a \$39.1-million expansion ... that by 2010"—when it's completed—"will house the newest in medical technology."

The article appeared in 2007. I was there at that groundbreaking, and as the people in Cambridge and Waterloo region know, work has yet to begin on that expansion.

So this resolution that my colleague has put forward is absolutely necessary in order that the people in this province can hold the government of the day, the McGuinty government, accountable for all these pre-election announcements in the whistle-stop tour made by the Minister of Health. They need to know what's going to happen, when it's going to happen and who's going to pay for it. Whether it is the capital funds that are going to be required or the operating funds, they are entitled to know.

Again, I want to commend and I want to thank my colleague from Cambridge. He has done a lot of hard work on this issue, and I hope that everybody will support him and hold the McGuinty government accountable for the promises they made prior to the 2011 election.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my voice to this debate. In my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton, particularly in Brampton, the Liberal government has made a number of promises, and I echo the sentiments of my colleague the member from Cambridge when he states that people in Ontario have lost their trust in the government, they have lost their trust in politicians, and it is incumbent on us as politicians to restore this trust in this government, to restore their trust in politicians, and for that reason, we must demand transparency and draw attention to the fact that this government has broken promise after promise.

In Peel Memorial Hospital in Brampton, the first promise the Liberal government made was that they would not close this hospital. It was then closed. After the hospital was closed, the second promise was that this hospital would be reopened. This hospital was not reopened. And the final promise, on the eve of the election, was that this hospital would be demolished and rebuilt.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable to break promises to the people of Ontario, and that's why I stand in solidarity with my colleague the member for Cambridge to demand that the government be accountable, be transparent and give us the true facts and figures with respect to the promises made to the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate, and I welcome the new member from Cambridge.

I think all members will know that private members' time is something that we get a little share of, and we use it wisely and try to use it in the best interests of our community when the opportunity arises to speak to the House, and I understand that that would be the member's intent here.

What I don't understand, to be perfectly frank, is that this information is available to any member of the House right now simply by going on the website. Any member of the House who wanted to have the information that is called for in the motion could go and get it, probably within the next 20 minutes. So while I think it's a great initiative for the member to put forward his desire to see this project undertaken—I certainly don't fault him for doing that; that's his job—I question the use of his very valuable private member's time to do that, because your next opportunity won't come up for some time down the road.

I can tell you the experience I've had in my own community of Oakville. We've got a project, one of the largest infrastructure projects in Ontario's history, under way in the form of a new hospital. It's being built; the tractors are moving.

We also have some other projects around the region of Halton that have been outstanding through successive governments going back quite some time, and it's our government that stepped forward with a plan to address that. You can go and look at that plan. Any one of us can go and see the outline, see the time, see the costing that's associated with each one of the plans.



We've committed to, as I understand it, amongst others, Cambridge Memorial, Vaughan, the Milton project—which I talked about—another one in Halton which is part of Halton Health care, Groves Memorial, Brockville General and Renfrew Victoria. They're all projects that we're investing in. The idea, obviously, is to improve health care in the province of Ontario, but we're the first government that has stepped forward with a plan to do that.

In 2003, when I became MPP for my community in Oakville, a lot of people had talked about the Oakville hospital. A lot of people had talked about the need for the Oakville hospital. Nobody had actually put a plan in place that addressed the building of the Oakville hospital. We were able to do that, and I'm happy to stand up and say today that that project is now under way and is being built.

We also approved Joe Brant, which is in a neighbouring community. The MPP from Burlington will know that that has been a project that, certainly—about 7% or 8% of people in Oakville actually use Joe Brant hospital, so I've taken an interest in that project. I've been invited by the people at Joe Brant to go and visit and to understand the needs and have gone out and advocated, along with the member—Minister McMeekin and I have certainly advocated. Even though it's not part of my own riding, we've gone down and advocated for that project to move ahead because we know how important it is to the people in Burlington.

If you look back, I think, over a series of governments and you look for the government that has done the most to renew the infrastructure in health care that needs to be done, I don't think there's anyone that holds a candle to the record of this government. We're building 18 new hospitals; we're renovating and improving over 100 others. Every project so far has come in on time and on budget.

There's no reason to believe that the information that's currently contained in the Infrastructure Ontario website is not accurate. I know, as the MPP for that area, that I had to advocate: I had to bang on a lot of doors, and I had to speak to a lot of ministers. Sometimes I felt the project was moving off track. It took a lot of work to bring it back on track.

I've seen members of the opposition who have done that hard work and legwork as well. I suspect that the member from Cambridge will probably have to do that as well, as will anybody else who has a project like this in their community. That's just part of being a good MPP and dealing with the political system that we have here.

These are all projects that we're investing in. When I look at the record of the party of the member opposite, though—I understand that when asked by the Hamilton Spectator, the leader of that party said that there was no guarantee that Joe Brant would be completed under that government.

That's not the way to address it. If the member wants to go back to the old way of doing things, that's how it

should be done. In this case, it's there in black and white for you to look at.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Wellington—Halton Hills.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your re-election to this House and the fact that you are serving this House as a presiding officer. With Hamilton in charge of this House, we can't go wrong.

The member for Cambridge has moved that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly require Premier McGuinty to table, by March 1, 2012, a specific and detailed plan that outlines the current stage of the development process, the timelines for proceeding to any subsequent stage, the deadlines for project completion and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of the hospital expansion promised before and during the 2011 Ontario general election.

What a sensible suggestion. I want to indicate at the outset that I'll be supporting the motion put forward today by the member for Cambridge. He deserves credit for seeking to shed some light on the government's approval process for hospital capital projects.

In the last Parliament, I tried my best to do the same. I asked for the hospital list by way of an order paper question. They refused to give it to me. I had to resort to a freedom-of-information request to obtain the list of proposed hospital capital projects in the province. But for some reason the government was initially unwilling to let us have the list.

1440

Why would the list of hospital projects be a secret, and what have they got to hide? You would think that the people of Ontario could be entrusted with the knowledge of where there are proposals for new hospital construction. But under the McGuinty Liberals, this apparently is not the case. My staff and I had to go through all kinds of hoops, including appeals, and in the end the information I received was incomplete. So, good for the member from Cambridge for so capably bringing this up again in the House.

My staff and I worked for eight years to help obtain approval for a new Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Centre Wellington, and again for 14 months to gain financial support for the Georgetown hospital's emergency room and CT scanner project.

I will hold the government to the commitments it made to my constituents in August of this year. In fact, doing all I can to hold the government's feet to the fire on their promises to support our hospital projects is one of my highest priorities in this 40th provincial Parliament. What could be more important?

The people of Wellington—Halton Hills deserve accessible public health care when they need it, of the highest quality possible as close to home as possible—period. Privileged to be their voice in this House, I will accept nothing less. I'm glad to also express support for the new Cambridge Memorial Hospital, which serves many of my constituents in the township of Puslinch.

I urge all members to support this resolution and send a strong signal that hospital project approvals should be determined on need, not on politics.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

The member from Cambridge has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I would like to thank all members who participated in the debate. I think there were very interesting positions taken by the government and certainly by the opposition side. But through you to the member for Oakville, Mr. Speaker, I will never be ashamed for using my private member's time to advocate for Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

Frankly, unless the plan demonstrates what the cost is, what the design of the hospital will be, when the cheque will arrive, when the machines will arrive, when the project will be complete and how we will fund the operation of that hospital, there is no plan.

I went on that government infrastructure plan. They list it on a nice website. There are no timelines for completion; there are sporadic costs associated with it. There's no plan. That's why we're tabling this motion today. I'm proud to stand up for Cambridge Memorial Hospital and all the hospitals across the province of Ontario.

#### YORK REGION TRANSIT LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL AU SEIN DES SERVICES DE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN DE LA RÉGION DE YORK

Mr. Shurman moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York / Projet de loi 7, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des entreprises qui fournissent des services de transport en commun dans la municipalité régionale de York.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Let me add my voice to the one that has already said congratulations on seeing you sitting in the chair. It does my heart good. I know you're a fair man.

Let's move ahead with Bill 7. This is a bill that I don't want to describe as last-minute, but with thanks to the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, we swapped ballot items and got it moved forward because I thought this was an urgent piece of business to bring before the House.

This bill is basically about putting public transit back in motion, putting buses on the street in the regional municipality of York; it has no other agenda. I do not consider it a partisan bill. This bill is entirely citizen-driven. One only has to look at my email queue or my in-basket to find that out, and I think that is true of all the people who represent ridings in York region.

I'm using this private member's legislation to do what the government and the unions and the companies involved appear unwilling to do, and that is to help the people of York region. And they need help. They need to get to work. They need to get their kids to school. They need to get to their appointments. In short, they need to live their lives, because transit, in any municipality as densely populated as York region but as far-flung as York region, requires that kind of service.

The goals of the bill, as stated in the bill, are to get transit working for York region residents again, to designate York Region Transit as an essential service, to prevent future disruptions in transit from causing personal and economic hardship, and also to secure a fair agreement for all parties involved in the dispute, including the transit users and the taxpayers of York region.

Let me focus for a moment on those very people, because in any labour dispute, as this House well knows and I think as most people know, there's always collateral fallout, and it's always the largest portion and the most unrepresented or underrepresented portion of the population that bears the brunt of a strike. In this particular case, as it is in most cases, it's the public who use the service.

Let me hold out an olive branch here by way of compromise right at the outset and say that I am well aware that everyone in this House wants a resolution to a strike that is now five weeks old. To that end, it strikes me that the element that we've included in this bill that speaks to declaring transit in York region an essential service is a stumbling block for people sitting and listening to this debate today.

That olive branch will take the following form: If this bill passes second reading today and goes to committee, I would be happy to accept an amendment that strikes the element of essential service from this bill. Why? Because, as I said at the beginning, this is about putting buses back on the street in York region and not making some kind of political statement. Be it as it may, the fact that I happen to support transit being declared an essential service—I'll take that out. That's the first compromise that I want to put on the table.

Let me recount some facts for this House and for people who are watching today. The strike started on October 24, 2011, so we're in the fifth week of a service disruption in York region. Let me also point out that we are eight days away from rising for the winter recess in this House, because we got a late start after an election. That means that if we don't get involved in this House in a resolution to this transit dispute and leave it to the parties to get back to the table and do something, which they haven't—there's been an abject absence for the past



five weeks of any negotiation—then, save and except for a return to this House on an emergency basis, we're not going to debate any back-to-work legislation affecting the strike until some time at the end of February, beginning of March at the earliest. It's going to be a long cold winter, as it always is in this area. We simply cannot allow this strike to go on any longer.

I might point out, Speaker, that I'm not the only person who's party to the strike on behalf of my constituents who thinks so. The union itself has said, "You know, if there were an arbitration, we would go back and get to work right away."

There have been no meaningful negotiations. In fact, there had been no picketing until recently. I might congratulate my colleague the member from Newmarket–Aurora, who said in public that there's so little in action on this strike that there's no picketing. I suppose in deference to that, there was a demonstration and a picket of the Finch subway station earlier today by about 200 strikers.

Students are missing classes. Parents are missing work. Jobs are being lost. Small business is suffering. In short, the residents of York region cannot afford to have this strike continue. We have been diligent—and when I say "we," I'm talking about my colleagues from York region on this side of the House: myself, the member from Newmarket–Aurora and the member from York–Simcoe—in following a process that was driven by our citizen concerns. That process was begun about four weeks ago, a week or 10 days into the strike, when we made a public statement requesting that cooler heads prevail and that the parties get back to the table and negotiate in earnest. As a matter of fact, I might say, by way of a tip of the hat to the new labour minister, that seemed to be in line with what the government side was calling for.

1450

We let it go for a couple of weeks. So now we're approximately three weeks into a strike, at which point my colleagues and I called for government legislation that would bring the sides to the table and mandatory arbitration or compulsory arbitration that would result in the settlement of the strike.

So we had previously called on all parties, we had previously called upon the government and we are where we are: We're five weeks into a strike; there is nobody talking, under any circumstances; and there are no buses moving in York region except for in a couple of spots, and I will explain why in a few moments.

To date, the McGuinty government has not taken any action to end the strike, and I might say that the Liberal MPPs from York region have been silent on this issue. Those are the MPPs from Richmond Hill, from Vaughan—where I might point out that there is a lesser disruption of service—in Oak Ridges–Markham and in Markham–Unionville—

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Well, it's not true that we've been silent, Peter, and you know it.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** You know you can come back and talk when your turn to speak comes around.

Why are these members not speaking up for their constituents?

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** It's all political, isn't it?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** They'll have their chance.

Why are they not speaking up for their constituents? It's not just my job to speak for the residents of Thornhill and the residents of south York region; it is the job of all seven of us to speak on behalf of our constituents. I'm not the only one that has an email queue and an inbox that says that they want action.

The lack of action on the part of the McGuinty government is victimizing York region residents. They're being victimized unduly; they're being victimized unfairly; they're being victimized unequally. So we invite our colleagues to join with us, and I have placed on the table a compromise that we would be happy to bring to the table in the event that they want to support second reading of this bill.

As for the essential service piece: While I've said that I would recant on that, move back and move away from that, it's worth pointing out that we spent some time in this House, not a year ago, debating and passing—and that was the government and the Progressive Conservative opposition—Bill 150. And Bill 150 declared that the TTC was an essential service at the request of the city of Toronto. Nobody seemed to have a problem with that. So, here we are in York region with a strike that is five weeks old, and somehow or other York region and the city of Toronto are not equivalent. What makes the people of York region exist on a lesser scale than the people here in Toronto?

I will point out as well that if you go back four years, we had a one-day strike of the TTC. They walked out for one day, disrupted a Friday evening in Toronto, and within 48 hours there was back-to-work legislation and an emergency session, on the weekend, of this Parliament to bring that to a close. So there is some kind of an inequity here between the city of Toronto and other parts, apparently.

York region is, as I mentioned, a far-flung region. It's a wide region: It goes from Georgina on the east all the way to Highway 400 to the west, Steeles on the south to Lake Simcoe on the north, and you have to get around in that. In that region, what we've got is a convoluted transit situation where there are five contracts in existence and there are three companies represented. Right now there are three locals on strike. There is no direct relationship with the region because these are private corporate suppliers.

The region's responsibility is to provide transit. I am not sitting in judgment on how they've chosen to do that, but they have chosen to do that by delegating the contract to provide that transit to private concerns. The region, at this point, is not stepping up and taking responsibility, because we're five weeks in and we see no talks. We must prevent this from happening again. At the very least, we must prevent it from going any further.

I want to repeat that this House has eight more sitting days—eight more sitting days. So on that basis, it is



incumbent upon us in this House to act now, because if we don't we are committing the people of York region not to five weeks but, more than likely, five months, and who knows what will happen to transit in that area?

I've pointed out that Liberals are particularly interested in Toronto. The Liberals voted for Bill 150. They put Bill 150 before us less than a year ago and they put emergency legislation before us four years ago, both of those issues pertaining to the TTC. What's wrong with York region? York region people want to know. York region is not a second-class citizen and, to boot, York region consists not only of Newmarket–Aurora, Thornhill and York–Simcoe; it consists as well of Richmond Hill, Oak Ridges–Markham, Markham–Unionville and Vaughan. So I want the members of those particular constituencies to stand up as well.

There are no options for people in York region. A cab ride to York University from Thornhill is 30 or 40 bucks each way. In Toronto you can get away with it; here, you can't. So I call upon all members of this House to understand what it is that we want. What we want is buses back on the streets of York region, and we want them there now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to congratulate you for being chosen to be in the chair. I think we will all be very happy with the selections that have been made for this particular Parliament.

I want to say, first of all, that I think there was an opportunity here to do something right. I'll agree with the member who just spoke. But I think what the member should have done is brought in a bill that deals with arbitration and back-to-work. I think if the member had done that, we probably would be in a position to be able to support that bill.

I know I've met with some of the membership and with the leadership of both locals 1587 and 113—and I notice that Mr. Doyle is here and also, I think, Mr. Kinnear, but the other Mr. Kinnear, right? Ha, I got it right. So I'm saying this in their presence: that we've had the discussion. Essentially, the union is saying, "Listen, we want to put an end to this strike. We want to find a way to negotiate and to settle the agreement." Unfortunately, it's a bit of a one-way street right now. The union is willing to try to find a solution, and it would appear that the employers are dragging their feet, for whatever reasons. I'm not going to cast aspersions, but just say that as a fact.

So there is an option that is open, and that option, I think the fair one, would have been to say that we need to have binding arbitration of some type in order to be able to get the parties to go before an arbitrator in order to settle this at the arbitration table. Will the union be totally happy with what an arbitrator has to say? No. Will the employer be completely happy with what the arbitrator has to say? No. But that's what arbitration is all about. It's about saying, "What's your position? What's your

position?" and the arbitrator going away and saying, "Okay, I'm going to look at this from both perspectives, and I'm going to find a saw-off somewhere in the middle." That's what arbitration is all about.

I find myself in a bit of an odd spot because I support part of what the member is trying to do. I'll be blunt. I'm agreeing with a Conservative here. You don't see me do that very often.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'll tell you—no, I run against Conservatives where I come from. It's a whole different story where I come from. But the point is this—and I'm known as a pretty reasonable guy. The point is that the member brings forward—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They're saying I'm a reasonable guy, and they're applauding? I'm in trouble.

I would just say that the member brings part of the bill—essentially there are three parts of it; one is that it's back-to-work legislation, which in itself is problematic for me. But there is arbitration. That I can support. I'm sure that if I sat down with ATU—and we've had this discussion. If the bill was strictly back to work for binding arbitration, I think my colleagues—I don't want to speak for them—more than likely would say, "Yeah, you know, that's not a bad idea. That's a way of moving things forward." We'd always rather they negotiate at the table. That's always the default. But where that can't happen—and it happens, at times—we have arbitration.

The poison pill in this thing is the essential services. I cannot, as a New Democrat, accept essential services when it comes to transit. I understand that sometimes this Legislature will have to make decisions about how to resolve strikes if they become deadlocked, but there's a way of doing that that I think, at the end of the day, finds a saw-off, and I don't think that this particular way we're coming at it, with essential services legislation, in fact imposing essential services on York region—I don't think it's right. I think that's not the way to go.

I would suggest to my friends that there are more private members' bills that are going to be able to be brought to this Legislature. If the Conservative Party wants to bring one forward—and I'm not saying that I agree entirely. We would have to see what it is, we would have to have a discussion, our leadership would have to sit down and look at that, and we'd have to talk to some people. But if you're talking about arbitration, well, we're in the ballpark. We can talk about that. But I will not stand in this House and vote in favour of essential services legislation. I just can't do that. It's against all of my principles.

I come out of the Steelworkers. I've negotiated collective agreement after collective agreement for the Steelworkers. I was a staff member of the Ontario Federation of Labour. As a person who comes out of the labour movement, has worked for the labour movement and has been part of it all of my life, I cannot go down that road at this point. I just think it would be a little bit too much for me to do. I understand we walk a fine line



in this Legislature as legislators and sometimes we have to do things that we don't like doing because it's the right thing to do. But I would just suggest to the member that if he had amended his bill right from the beginning and said, "We will have arbitration," you would have had a better chance for us to do it.

1500

The problem we now have is if we say, "Oh, yeah, we'll support you," nod, nod, wink, wink, and all of a sudden we vote for what is essentially an essential services bill, and the member or the government doesn't agree to an amendment, then where am I? I've essentially supported back-to-work legislation that has essential services.

I just say to the member: I know you're trying to do the right thing. You're an honourable member, sir; I say that with all sincerity. You're trying to do what's right for your community. I get it. You're trying to move this thing forward, but this is a method that I cannot support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and it really is a pleasure to see you in that seat. I have observed you over the last few days since we returned here, and it appears we have a mellower Miller in the House.

Now, to address the very real concerns expressed in what we see as Bill 7 before us, brought by the member from Thornhill: I always like to be as positive as I can, and I will certainly say that I share your concerns about the difficulties that our constituents, in fact, are facing, given the transit disruption in York region. My constituency office has been in receipt of a number of phone calls. The particular hardships of students and seniors are certainly there; we hear about them.

But we have been able to explain to our constituents exactly the process that is being undergone here. We on this side of the House—in this party—clearly believe in collective bargaining and negotiations in good faith as being the best way of settling this type of situation.

My office has been in regular communication with the regional chairman, and that individual, of course, has reported to regional council on the situation and the progress of negotiations. We have no request from regional council to go any further at this point. They are very pleased with the fact that our Minister of Labour has appointed a provincial mediator. I understand there's even a federal mediator involved in the situation. This is a crucial difference that we face between our situation in York region and the situation in Toronto.

I not only respect my constituents, but I respect the duly elected members of regional council. They have not requested that our government move forward. They have not made the type of deputations that the city of Toronto did in the disruption of services from the TTC. The situation, according to the regional chairman—and I have a letter he sent out, actually, at 2:44 today—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** At 2:44?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** At 2:44, just some 20 minutes ago. His position is, and I quote directly from his letter, "The transit providers have substantial offers on the table that include increases in salary, sick days and benefits; however, the unions have refused to consider them."

"The union leadership has ignored offers by the transit contractors, asking instead for arbitration. The contractors and the government of Ontario have both rejected calls for arbitration and the region is not in a position to force this option on any of the parties involved."

I think that the regional chairman has made it very clear he does not consider the situation as at an impasse. He wants both sides to get back to the table.

I'd also like to make a few comments in terms of the solution proposed here. It may seem like a very superficially attractive proposition. I would suggest that it's a really quite simplistic response to a very complex issue.

It's very much what we saw in the election only less than two months ago from the PC Party. It's very easy to call for a simplistic measure like tax cuts when you don't consider where the service cuts are going to come from. We know that the people of Ontario rejected, on October 6, those politics of division. This is precisely where negotiation and a nuanced response are what is required. And I would suggest to you that regional council is also the representative of our constituents, and they have not requested that our government take any further action in this regard at this point in time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, this message that we've just heard from the member from Oak Ridges–Markham is the reason that some 40,000 victims of this strike are today suffering hardship—financial hardship, personal hardship. Seniors can't get to medical appointments. People with disabilities can't get from their home to their place of work. And we hear from this member that the reason that she and the government are refusing to act here today on this legislation that could end this strike is because she hasn't heard from the regional government, that they have not requested this. The reason that we are here and that the member from Thornhill has tabled this legislation is precisely because no one else is taking any action.

I stand here with my colleagues and I say to the regional government of York region: You have failed the people who elected you. I stand here and I say that whether it is the union, who at least is saying, "Bring in an arbitrator so that we can resolve this"—we now have a Liberal government here, probably all four members who are representing people in York region, who are saying, along with the regional government, "We will wash our hands as well." Shame on the people who are hearing on a day-to-day basis from the people who are suffering.

To the member from Oak Ridges–Markham: Here is an email, which is among many, that I received as a copy. I read for the record, and I'm happy to deliver it over: "My local MPP Helena Jaczek has not taken



trouble to return my many calls made to her office. Kindly table a bill to back to" work "legislation and make YRT an essential service."

Speaker, we can speak nicely here about how we want to follow process. We are elected, all of us here, to represent the people in our ridings who look to us for leadership. I am not going to wait for the regional chair—who, by the way, was never elected by anyone; he was appointed by some regional councillors, and that's another issue. If anything, what I've heard here and the lack of initiative on the part of our regional chair motivate me to bring forth another private member's bill that calls on the regional chair to be elected so that the regional chair can in fact be accountable to the people who elected him.

I believe that we have a responsibility in this House to ensure that the regional public transit system works for the people who pay for it, the people whose tax dollars pay for it, who you, member from Oak Ridges–Markham, represent—and the member from Richmond Hill and the member from Vaughan. I have some emails relating to the member from Vaughan, too, but I won't read them.

If we cannot come together here in this Legislature and do the right thing—as the member from Thornhill has so rightly said, it took us less than 48 hours to bring back-to-work legislation in for the city of Toronto and the TTC. And yes, there was leadership from the city of Toronto, but the fact that there isn't from the region of York doesn't mean that we shouldn't be doing our job. That's why we're here with this legislation today.

I say to the government: I read in the throne speech the importance of an integrated transit system throughout the greater Toronto area. I suggest it begs the credibility if on the one hand we call for an integrated, seamless transit system throughout the GTA and yet have it fragmented because of fragmented labour legislation that relates to it.

1510

I will not shrink from the fact that I believe that transit should, in fact, be an essential service; that no one who relies on public transit should be held hostage through and as a result of a labour negotiation. I, too, believe in collective bargaining, but collective bargaining—ask the gentlemen here who are on the union side—is not working, and that's why we're here.

We're saying, "Bring in the arbitrator," and that's exactly what this bill does. It brings in an arbitrator. It sets down some conditions and some guidelines for that arbitration, such as the ability to pay; such as the fiscal condition of York region and the province. But what it does is it ensures that the people who need transit have it while the negotiation is taking place with the assistance of an arbitrator.

And so, here we are. We have four Liberal MPPs who refused to sign a letter that we sent to the Minister of Labour on November 10, simply asking the minister to bring in legislation so that this matter could be resolved. The spaces are blank, and I suggest, from what I'm hearing, that when we vote this afternoon on this bill they

will be blank one more time. They won't vote for this. But they will have to answer to their constituents, to the people in their ridings—

**Mr. Greg Sorbara:** We're going to miss you, Frank. We're going to miss you.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** You're going to miss me?

**Mr. Greg Sorbara:** Yeah, we're going to miss you when you're gone.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I defer to the member—you see, for those who are watching this and who can't hear, the member from Vaughan is suggesting that I will be gone. Well, I suggest that if I am gone, I will at least have done my job here today in standing up for my constituents.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** May I suggest that we don't get personal and that we stick to the issue, please. And no personal comments. Thank you.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Mr. Speaker, it truly is an honour and a privilege to rise here today in this House. If you'll indulge me, I'd like to thank the members of my community of Essex, who put their faith in me as their representative, as their member of provincial Parliament. I carry their hopes and their aspirations each and every day when I walk into this wonderful building, so thanks to them as well.

Congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your new role. That seat certainly looks comfortable, and it suits you.

From the first couple of days that I've had the ability to be in this House, I can already tell by the tone that we will all be wonderful friends by the end of this session.

It is indeed a pleasure to rise and speak to the content of this bill, and in my role as the critic for labour for the New Democrats, it's an issue that's near and dear to my heart. I want to also thank my colleague from Timmins–James Bay for sharing his time with me.

The riding of Essex is a wonderful place. It is a mix of urban and rural, small hamlets: Lakeshore, Kingsville, LaSalle. As well, Leamington is in the riding of my good friend from Chatham–Kent. We have no public transit system, so you can imagine my wonderment as a new member coming to Toronto and finding out how efficiently and effectively you move so many people around.

It is really that issue, that effectiveness and the importance of a wholesome, healthy public transit system, that we're discussing here today—all the more important to have arbitration; to have collective agreements that make sure the system works; to make sure it runs safely, effectively and cleanly. That's why we have some issues, obviously, with the content of this bill, as my honourable colleague mentioned.

If it were not for the special designation, the essential services designation, we might actually indicate some support for it. We know that the members of that community are affected. We also know that the negotiators,



too, are coming to the conclusion that there will not be any headway made on negotiations.

I can tell you as a labourer, someone who has come out of the trade union movement myself, that I rely on my union to bargain on my behalf. It is a role they play to ensure that I have a good standard of living, that I have safe working conditions and that I am truly appreciated in my career. Knowing that, our union has always had the ability to negotiate with whom we call our contractor partners. These are construction firms in the Windsor and Essex county area. Some are large, some are small, but typically they're family firms. By the nature of their being family firms—you know, local history—I think they have some stake in the game; they have some skin in the game.

What I believe we're dealing with here is a conglomerate of multinational companies that are some of the largest private providers of transit in North America. For instance, Veolia—I don't know if I'm pronouncing that right—had 2010 revenues of \$50 billion. Now, that's not your mom-and-pop operation. The United Kingdom-based FirstGroup had \$10 billion in revenue in their last fiscal year.

I guess what we're dealing with here too is fairness. In comparison to other jurisdictions, and in comparison to workers who are doing similar work in and around the GTA, workers in York region are receiving roughly \$7.42 less for the same work that they are doing. We just don't think that is fair. Of course those workers are going to stand up for their rights and stand up for equality.

Also, the Conservative caucus mentioned that it is a program that is subsidized by York region taxpayers to the extent of \$4.11 for each ride. It makes that fare one of the highest in Ontario. We may actually want to break into a discussion of value for money when it comes to integrating private companies into our public transit system. I think that was mentioned earlier as well.

All told, the push toward deeming this an essential service is something we've seen not so long ago at the federal level with the Conservative government attempting to deem Air Canada workers and postal workers as essential and forcing them back to work. It's something that, in my mind, is not productive. It's an affront to the process of collective bargaining, a process that is enshrined in our rights here in Canada, enshrined in our charter. If we move toward that, I would submit that the NBA is in a lockout position today; let's deem them essential too, due to their massive payrolls and the fact that they contribute so much economically. Let's not move down that path. Let's let this process evolve. Let's let the negotiators at the bargaining table work through the process.

Also, recently a telephone poll of roughly 2,100 residents of the York region showed that 71% of those residents wanted the regional government to intervene. Seeing that the regional government is not prepared to do that, I think it is incumbent on us to try to figure out how we can help this process. Maybe just by the nature of us talking about it here may push the agenda.

I'll end, Mr. Speaker. This has been a wonderful inaugural speech. It really feels good; it feels comfortable. I like it here. It's fun. It's as fun as I expected it to be. I don't know how productive it will be, in the end.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Please, please.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Well, if we set the bar low enough, we can achieve anything, right?

I will end by saying that New Democrats stand firm with the transit workers and call on all parties to end the strike, get back to the table and enact binding arbitration with a neutral arbitrator.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating you in your position as Acting Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise in this House to speak on An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York.

1520

We all know that public transit is one of the major tools for moving people around from one point to the other, particularly in large municipalities, and York region is no exception. The residents of my riding of Richmond Hill live in the municipality of York region, and they are also affected by the strikes over the past five weeks. Thousands and thousands of residents of York region, including Richmond Hill, every day use public transit to go to work, to hospitals, to doctors, to dentists, shopping, to schools and to universities, and they're all affected by this strike.

That is why our government, the Minister of Labour and the Ministry of Labour, since the beginning of this dispute, have appointed a provincial labour mediator to bring the parties to the table and to assist them in coming up with a resolution to this issue, and they have been working very hard. In the past, the mediator has been very effective and efficient in solving and resolving labour disputes. Actually, last year, Mr. Speaker, 98% of labour disputes were resolved by the mediator.

We believe in negotiation. The parties should come to the table and negotiate and come up with an acceptable solution to this issue. That's why our Ministry of Labour and our government are encouraging people to come to the table and negotiate. Here, there are three contract companies, as our honourable member from the third party mentioned: Miller Transit, Veolia Transportation and First Student Canada. These are the contract employers in the region—and also the unions; they have to come to the table. They have to negotiate. We believe in collective bargaining.

We cannot, Mr. Speaker, for every strike bring a solution in this House and come up with back-to-work legislation. And when it comes to this particular case, York region, who is somehow the employer, although they are not directly the employer, should come to the House. They should come to the Ontario government and ask for help. They have never done that. In the case of the city of Toronto, the city of Toronto and the mayor of Toronto



came to the Ontario government and requested our assistance, for our help, this House's help. York region hasn't done so.

So the process should continue. We hope that both parties will come to the table and will agree on a mutually agreeable solution to solve this problem so that people can use public transit in a way that they should be doing.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to join my colleagues the MPP for Newmarket–Aurora and the MPP for Thornhill to call on this government to take action to end the York region transit strike.

In the course of the debate that has taken place so far today, there are a couple of things that I want to refer to, and one of them was in the remarks made by the member from Oak Ridges–Markham. The point that she made, as I understand it, was that we should do nothing because the chair of York region hasn't asked for the province to get involved. At the same time, there is an indication from the same chair that no headway is being made in the negotiations as they currently stand, and I think that's exactly why we're here. You're missing the point. We are here because no one else is listening. I'm listening to my constituents. I'm listening to those people whose lives are interrupted; who can't get to work, who can't get to school, who can't provide themselves with the facility of getting around, and they do feel like victims because there's no one at the table that represents and speaks on their behalf.

We have a letter from the York region separate school board where they outline the kind of problems that their students have run into as a result of this. We also have the position that was taken in the election platform of the Liberals: "Public transit helps move people and goods faster; but it also keeps our air clean for ... children and seniors." You even claim to have made the largest investments in Ontario's history. Well, I have to ask you: What good are any of your words and promises if there is no transit system for people to use? What does it matter if we have lots of buses and infrastructure if the buses do not run?

We know that there have been meetings taking place at different times in the last five weeks, but they have not reached an agreement. York region, up to this point, has not become directly involved. The three MPPs have—and we have, in the absence of the kind of leadership that others could take. I think it's most important for people to understand that our purpose is to bring this strike to an end, to raise that awareness, to provide the opportunities for the parties to come together.

I want to also speak briefly about the member from Timmins–James Bay's concern. I would say to you that, in fact, the bill does ask for an arbitrator to be appointed to facilitate a fair and neutral agreement. I would also remind the member from Timmins–James Bay that one

of the purposes of second reading is, in fact, to continue the conversation; it is not there to provide a final position. That's why amendments can be brought in after second reading. So I would urge the member for Timmins–James Bay to look at this as an instrument and as a process; if there are parts of this bill, as he suggests, that he does have sympathy for, that he would take those into consideration in supporting the bill at second reading, which would then keep it on the table and allow for such kinds of amendments as he wishes.

In the meantime, speaking on behalf of my constituents, I feel this debate is essential to being able to provide them with a sense that we do care, we are interested in their livelihood and their well-being, and we are there to represent them. For that reason, we have no option but to bring this on the floor of the Ontario Legislature when no one else is.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Greg Sorbara:** It's unfortunate that my first opportunity to deliver remarks in this Legislature is on this subject, because it's a difficult subject. All of us from York region know that, in our community, it's not just students, it's not just workers, but it's a whole community that is having to put up with a transit strike that is really affecting the community. I agree with my friend from Thornhill: This is very disruptive. We are very concerned that that transit system begin running at full force as soon as possible.

I was frankly offended by my friend's remarks when he said that it was only himself and my friends from Newmarket–Aurora and from York–Simcoe who were doing anything about that strike. That's patent nonsense. It's just foolish to say that, and it's offensive. My friend from Richmond Hill, my colleague from Oak Ridges–Markham and myself are equally involved in trying to find a settlement to this strike and making representations as forcibly as any member on that side. I want you to remember that.

The second thing that he needs to know is this: This strike will be settled, and it will be settled when the parties reasonably come together and, perhaps, send outstanding issues to binding arbitration, just as is proposed in my friend's bill.

But the great irony here is that my friend the finance critic for the Progressive Conservative Party is part of a party that, every single day since the election, has been demanding a public sector wage freeze. That is, they want every public sector worker in this province to have their contracts frozen—remember that? Zap, you're frozen—for two years. You're talking about public sector workers, people who are driving our buses.

On the one hand, you stand up and make great speeches. This morning in question period, your leader was demanding once again—and I'm quoting—that we instruct the Minister of Finance "to bring in a mandatory wage freeze for public sector workers." That's what you're asking for. Well, bus drivers are public sector workers, and when it's bus drivers, you say, "Oh, no, no,



no, we don't want a wage freeze there. No, no, no, we're getting calls from our constituents." You're saying, "We want binding arbitration, back-to-work legislation."

*Interjections.*

1530

**Mr. Greg Sorbara:** I'm just telling my friend that it's so inconsistent, it's so offensive, that on the one hand you would be—all that puffery about a public sector wage freeze—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you for your indulgence. It's getting a little loud in the chamber. I would recommend that some of the members cut it back a little bit.

**Mr. Greg Sorbara:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I've touched a nerve over there.

I just want to say to my friend that he knows, all the members from York region know and all the members in this Parliament know that it will not be long before these parties get together, as happens almost invariably in labour negotiations, and they will sit down and resolve their differences.

This is not a situation, tough as it is for our residents, where we need to bring in legislation, as my friend from Timmins–James Bay says, that makes it an essential service or provides for legislated binding arbitration. Arbitration will happen. This strike will end, and York region will get back to good bus service sooner than you think.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

The member from Thornhill has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I want to thank all of the participants in the debate: the members from Timmins–James Bay, Oak Ridges–Markham, Newmarket–Aurora, Essex, Richmond Hill and York–Simcoe, and especially the member from Vaughan. I want to say, in reference to his recent comments, I'm not really interested in what is offensive to you; I'm interested in getting the buses back on the roads of York region.

We have a common concern. Regardless of from what direction you come, the NDP, the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative Party are united in one thing: We all want to see those buses running again. We have union leaders sitting in the gallery here today who are looking for the binding arbitration that this bill puts on the table so that we could have those buses running again.

We have an opportunity here to pass this bill through second reading, take it to committee and do whatever we have to to make it work. The fact that we have word, through the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, on what the regional chair says are substantial offers on the table doesn't matter one whit. The reason it doesn't matter is because that represents one side of the equation. Obviously, the other side of the equation has no interest in whether or not those offers are good, bad or indiffer-

ent, because it won't come to the table, which means we're at a stalemate.

That's why we've had this debate here today. We need to publicly air what the people of York region want and what the people of York region need. We, in the absence of any action from the government or anywhere else, have to bring this legislation through second reading so that we can see to what we want. And what do we want? We want good public transit service for the people of York region, just as we want it for Toronto or any other part of the province.

I urge all members to recognize that what they're doing is accepting that premise by voting for second reading of this bill, and we'll deal with the rest of it in committee.

#### RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT (HST REBATE FOR HOME HEATING), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL (REMBOURSEMENT DE LA TVH POUR LE CHAUFFAGE DOMESTIQUE)

Mr. Mantha moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide for a rebate of the Ontario portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax in respect of certain home heating costs / Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail pour prévoir un remboursement de la composante ontarienne de la taxe de vente harmonisée à l'égard de certains frais de chauffage domestique.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, let me congratulate you. I look forward to, from this distance over here, looking towards you for your wisdom, your guidance and, as a new MPP, your assistance in my role in completing my task to serve my constituents.

It is an honour to address this Legislature. It's a pleasure to do so as a representative of my neighbours, friends and family, and communities in Algoma–Manitoulin. Soon, like many Ontarians, I will get up and reach for my toque, mitts, boots and scarf before I leave the house, and then I might reach for a shovel before I get to my car.

There is a point here: It's getting colder. It's getting really cold out there, and Ontarians are going to see the cost of staying warm go up. We all live in Ontario. We know that, come winter, the heating bills go up.

Bientôt, il va falloir tirer ma toque, mes mitaines, et puis mon foulard, avant de partir de la maison. Et comme défi, avant de me rendre à ma voiture, je vais chercher une pelle aussi. Tu sais pleinement comment ça fait frais dehors.

It's a fact of life. I can tell you that in Elliot Lake we know a thing or two about cold winters. It's also a fact

that these essential costs hit families and lower-income Ontarians the hardest. People across Ontario are facing another winter of pain, with the unfair HST on top of their home heating. Another winter of paying the HST on top of their already existing home heating costs will make this winter a real tough one. We can't wait to make a decision on this until next summer. Working together to take the HST off home heating is something that needs to be done now.

It is a fact that the Liberal government made staying warm a lot more expensive for Ontarians by adding the HST to the cost of home heating. This was done in the face of overall energy costs which are expected to grow by 50% over the next five years. Everywhere we look, costs are going up, and adding the HST adds these costs where Ontarians can least afford to manage it. It also puts greater stress on people living on fixed incomes, people living in homes they cannot afford to insulate; in short, those who can least afford it. Every time a household heating bill goes up by \$1, it actually goes up by \$1.13. It adds up; it all adds up.

De jour en jour, le coût de la vie augmente, et la TVH ajoute des coûts aux Ontariens et surtout à ceux qui ne peuvent pas y arriver avec le budget familial. La pression sur leur vie quotidienne avec les gens qui n'ont pas les moyens d'investir dans leur propre maison—le tout est énorme.

En bref, c'est eux qui ne peuvent pas financer ces demandes adéquatement. À tout instant que le prix du chauffage augmente d'un dollar, réellement l'augmentation est d'un dollar et treize sous.

The HST is costing the average family budget hundreds of dollars more every year. Where does this hit hardest? On essentials, and it hurts Ontario families. It's added hundreds of dollars in new costs. It was New Democrats who demonstrated that the HST is actually adding to the costs that Ontario's people are facing. In fact, we know that, in 2009, the Liberals had a secret document that showed that the HST was going to cost Ontario families an average of \$1,500 more every year.

1540

Sure, some of this HST comes from discretionary spending, but what's outrageous is that it is also being added on household items—things like home heating. It's just unfair. It's up to Ontario households to manage their budgets and discretionary spending. But I don't think that keeping the furnace on qualifies as being discretionary. Turning the furnace off just isn't an option; it's not a choice. Taking the HST off home heating would save a family with two kids an average of \$100 per year. It will put more money back into the pockets of those Ontarians who live further north—places where the cost of living is often higher in general.

Éliminer la TVH sur le prix du chauffage retournera en moyenne 100 \$ à chaque année au budget des familles qui comprennent deux enfants. Pour les gens du Nord, ceci remettra des sous additionnels dans leurs poches, surtout dans les endroits où le coût de la vie est souvent plus haut en général.

The rising cost of household essentials is a problem we're facing across Ontario. We know that Ontarians are anxious about their jobs and their ability to make ends meet. This sort of anxiety is often exacerbated during the holiday seasons. This is a very modest first step in order to ease the burden on Ontario families.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Excuse me. If you could take the sidebars outside. I'm having trouble hearing the member, and there are two large sidebars on either side of me. Please take it outside. Thank you.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thus far, this government has been interested in giving blank cheques to businesses that ship jobs out of province, all the while adding the cost of essentials onto Ontario families. They are content to give tax breaks to executives going to Leafs games or box seats at the Rogers Centre, but giving a break to everyday Ontario families isn't a priority. They would rather pay billions for failed power plants which never should have been built than help folks manage their own household costs.

Giving a tax break to big businesses while making Ontario households pay more for everyday essentials creates the wrong priorities. Ultimately, it all comes down to that: priorities. The actions of the Liberals would seem to show that their priorities are to let the salaries of public sector executives skyrocket, salaries which are paid by everyday Ontarians. It would seem to show that their priorities are letting businesses write off entertainment like box seats for Leafs or expense account dinners that cost more than most people's car payments.

I think it's time we try something new. Let's try putting people first in this province. Earlier this week we heard the minority government make a promise—a good promise—to work with the opposition on good ideas that improve Ontario families and their quality of life.

Je pense que c'est le moment de saisir une nouvelle avenue pour la province et de mettre les gens en priorité. Plus tôt dans la semaine, nous avons entendu nos collègues du gouvernement minoritaire faire promesse de travailler et consulter avec l'opposition sur des bonnes idées qui amélioreront la qualité de vie pour tous les Ontariens.

Le premier pas, c'est maintenant, et c'est de prendre l'étape, de prendre le pas, de bâtir un avenir prometteur et de commencer par éliminer la TVH.

The first step is giving people a much needed break. Taking the HST off essentials is a step in the right direction. Some of the next steps involve capping public CEO salaries and ending the policy of blank cheques to big businesses; we'll cross those bridges when we get there. But let's build this first bridge. Let's build this one and let's start.

In the throne speech, the Liberal government said that they were committed to those who are vulnerable. Well, this will help those who are struggling to make ends meet.

In the throne speech, the Liberal government said that they were committed to a quality of life for families.



Well, this will help families keep their children comfortable and healthy.

In the throne speech, the Liberal government appeared to extend an olive branch to the opposition to work together on good public policy. This, my friend, is good public policy.

We can start setting the tone for this session of this Legislature right now by showing Ontarians that we can work together when it comes to the best interests of everybody in this province. This is not a reckless bill. This is not a bill designed to play any type of politics. This is a reasonable bill that reflects the needs of people in this province.

At the start of every session, we hear members on both sides of the floor say nice words, generous language, and we speak about shared values. Well, folks, it's time to put the theory into practice, because talk is cheap and Ontario is watching.

New Democrats have made it clear that our doors are open to members on both sides, and we want to get down to work and help Ontarians. I sincerely hope that the Conservatives and the Liberals will recognize that taking the HST off the cost of home heating will provide much-needed relief for many, many Ontario families.

*Ceci est un petit pas—*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Time's up. Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Speaker, may I say what a commendable job you're doing in the chair. We're enjoying having you there.

This has been a year in which people worldwide have risen against injustice and inequity: against injustice by toppling inflexible and unresponsive regimes in Africa and the Middle East; against inequity in how people all over the world have pointed out that the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few people exists at the expense of the more than 90% of the rest of us. And it is how this private member's bill proposes to take yet more money from the pockets of the poor and the middle class and transfer it disproportionately to the bank accounts of Ontario's very wealthy that is my reason for not supporting it.

Speaker, this bill comes from a new member, and it's an idea that, this fall, his party couldn't sell at the doors. So, in the spirit of being constructive and co-operative in this minority Parliament, let's discuss the idea that Ontario's voters did not buy.

There is no free lunch. What is given in one tax measure to one group of people has to be taken from another. The member will agree that he is asking Ontarians to take a precious \$350 million away from one group of taxpayers and transfer that money to another group of taxpayers, and it's the wrong group in both cases.

The overwhelming majority of homes are heated by one of two fuels: electricity and natural gas. The member's proposal would actually raise prices for those whose homes are heated by electricity. Ontario's clean energy benefit, which is already the law of the land, takes 10%, not 8%, off hydro bills, no matter what you use

hydro for. The member's proposal then is a tax grab, pure and simple.

The clean energy benefit saves the typical householder about \$150 per year, or to put it another way, that's all the HST on \$1,875 in electricity purchases. That pays all the HST on a bimonthly hydro bill of \$312—and that's a lot of electricity.

#### 1550

The member's proposal can't do as well on electricity as Ontario's existing clean energy benefit is already doing. In fact the member's proposal, as it would apply to electricity, would cost the average householder an additional \$30, not to mention the sheer impossibility of sorting out electricity kilowatt hours used for heating from electricity kilowatt hours used for everything else.

Let's look at natural gas. While electricity prices have been going up all over the world, which is why we have the Ontario clean energy benefit, natural gas prices have been going down all over the world. So why does the member propose a tax giveaway to users of a commodity whose price has been steadily falling? For the member from Algoma-Manitoulin and his 73,400 constituents, Ontario already offers northern families up to \$204 per year through the northern Ontario energy credit.

What does the northern Ontario energy credit mean to hard-working families in Algoma-Manitoulin? It means they have an income-tested way to offset their natural gas bills. Those of modest and moderate means benefit most, as it should be. That \$204, if your household qualifies for it, pays all the HST on \$2,550 worth of natural gas bills, or to put it another way, that's all the HST on a monthly gas bill of \$212.50. If your natural gas bill is lower than that, you're coming out ahead. Remember, you get all that without removing the HST on natural gas or even fuel oil heating bills.

So why does the member for Algoma-Manitoulin propose to rebate the same money twice on natural gas, a fuel whose price is falling, when leading economists say that three times the share of the proposed NDP tax grab will go to households in the highest one-fifth income brackets? This makes no sense, and that's why Ontarians gave it a thumbs down in October. In fact, proposing that residents dip into taxpayer funds once for the northern Ontario energy credit and a second time for a proposed HST credit would indeed make the member and his followers double-dippers.

On top of the unnecessary and duplicative measures proposed in the member's tax giveaway, the member's bill also ignores the enhanced Ontario energy and property tax credit, which is \$1,044, already available for seniors, and \$917, already available for non-seniors. That measure, already implemented, rebates seniors in Algoma-Manitoulin all the HST on up to \$13,050 in purchases, and rebates non-seniors the HST on up to \$11,462 of anything else they purchase.

Speaker, I do not agree that we need to take \$350 million from schools, hospitals, senior care and children to do what Ontario's existing modern taxation system



already does anyway. That's why I'm going to vote against this private member's bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this bill. Our leader, Tim Hudak, spoke to this issue time and time again throughout the recent election campaign. Our leader has made our position very clear to Ontarians: We know you need relief, and it's coming.

Between 2003 and 2011, the residential hydro rate has skyrocketed from 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour to 10.7 cents a kilowatt hour, a 150% increase. Energy prices continue to rise as a result of this government's expensive and patchwork energy experiments, and Ontario families simply can't take anymore. They need relief.

We have all heard stories from people who are struggling—really struggling—to pay their home heating bills. This is especially true, as my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin pointed out, in northern Ontario, where heating isn't a luxury; it's an absolute necessity. Our winters are longer in the north. Our winters are colder in the north.

Let me give you a real-life example of the differences. This is something that occurred throughout the last election campaign when I knocked on the door of Roger and Monique Beaulieu. They live on King Street in North Bay, Ontario, which was my boyhood home. I knocked on their door, and we chatted about their energy bills. I asked them to show me their hydro bill and their natural gas bill. While my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin suggests it's \$100 savings, let me tell you that for Roger and Monique Beaulieu it is \$243.60. That is the difference that they would save because of the colder winter and the longer winter—\$243.60 in the pockets of that hard-working family, the Beaulieus in North Bay, Ontario.

This bill can make a meaningful difference in the lives of Ontario families, families like the Beaulieus. Our party will be supporting this bill as it meets the criteria for one of our three priorities, and that is to support families and give them the relief they need.

We urge the members opposite to join us in this straight up or down vote to bring immediate relief to your constituents as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's my pleasure to have a chance to speak to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin's private member's bill, but particularly my pleasure to do so with you sitting in the chair. Congratulations on your first day in the chair. It's very becoming of you to be sitting in the Speaker's chair, and we're very proud of you for doing that.

There were some comments that were made across the way, and our members are going to talk to the bill because, obviously, we've brought it forward. We're very proud of it. We think it is absolutely the right thing to do because of what Mr. Mantha—sorry, the member

from Algoma-Manitoulin—has said and because of what the member for Nipissing has said.

It is obvious that this is absolutely the right thing to do, that it was the wrong tax in the first place to be foisted on Ontarians at a time when they were suffering from the impacts of a recession. Not only was it the wrong tax and brought in at the wrong time, but it was put on basic essentials—basic essentials—like home heating and hydro, things that people don't have a choice but to consume. Yes, people can do things like implement retrofits to their home to reduce their consumption, but guess what? They don't have the money to do it. And with the HST on their utility bills, they have even less money to invest in those kinds of energy-saving types of retrofits.

But you know what? I nearly fell off my chair, quite frankly; I nearly swallowed my tongue when I heard a Liberal talking about who it is that benefits from the HST, like somehow everyday people are benefiting from the HST. We know that companies are benefiting from the HST, and we know that companies are also benefiting from across-the-board tax cuts that these guys are putting in place. It's the people at the top that the Liberals continue to serve.

So when the member from Mississauga-Streetsville actually has the gall to say that somehow our bill here today favours the wealthy—really, if I was chewing gum, I would have swallowed it. I found it quite unbelievable. It is so untrue. Everybody knows that the people at the bottom are the ones who spend much more of a percentage of their income on things like home heating and hydro, so they're the very ones who benefit more: fixed-income seniors, people with low incomes, everyday middle-class families who are not able to make ends meet anymore, those middle-class families who are now in the 99%. The only ones who are benefiting from this government's tax policies are the 1%, and that is the absolute truth.

1600

Speaker, billions and billions of dollars are being lost on the revenue side in across-the-board corporate tax cuts that are not doing anything. They're not creating jobs; they're not stimulating investment; they're not training workers. It is the wrong tax policy.

The HST that takes money out of the pockets of hard-working Ontarians and puts it in the pockets of the corporate sector, which then sends jobs somewhere else and doesn't keep them here in Ontario, is not the right tax policy, so we are proud to have brought in this bill today.

Now, I know that we don't agree on everything with the Conservatives beside us here in opposition, but there are some things we agree on, and in this case, the HST off home heating is something that absolutely they talked about during the campaign and that we talked about during the campaign.

Hello, a wake-up call to the Liberals: They didn't get a majority this time around. So they may smugly talk about how people decided at the last election, but guess what? They decided not to give you all the power. That's why



you have to start listening to the people and understand that they do need a break. Maybe you should think about how you vote on this particular private member's bill today, because you have people in your ridings who are suffering just as badly as the people in our ridings. We look forward to your support in this particular initiative.

Speaker, CEO salaries in the public sector going through the roof; corporate tax cuts to corporations that aren't investing, that aren't creating jobs; private power payoffs to companies to save Liberal seats—those are the wrong priorities, the wrong choices. Let's get the HST off home heating once and for all and give people a break.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

First of all, I want to thank my community of Ottawa Centre for giving me the opportunity again to serve them in this great Legislature. I am humbly obliged to them.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have just come out of a campaign. Campaigns are a really good time for us to be out in the community and to have those very important conversations, door to door to door, about issues that are important. I can tell you that in my riding of Ottawa Centre, there were two issues that came up again and again and again which my constituents wanted me to work on. Number one: the economy. Everybody, in light of the instability, the uncertainty that exists in the global marketplace, especially what is going on in Europe, spoke about the need to ensure that we in Ontario, and in Canada, of course, grow our economy and that we all work together and work hard to ensure that we not only strengthen our economy but also create new jobs.

Given the economic uncertainty, given the fact that we are seeing there are less revenues coming in within the provincial government, we need to make sure what wherever we decide to spend our money, we do so in a wise fashion and we do so in a fashion that is actually going to create new jobs.

This measure, introduced by the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, does not create one new job in the province of Ontario—not a single new job. This is not going to help strengthen our economy. It is not going to make sure that the hard-working people get good-paying, meaningful jobs in our province.

What essentially it's going to do is take \$350 million out of our revenue source, and that money will disappear, as opposed to taking that money and investing it in a fashion that creates good jobs.

For example, we are introducing the healthy home renovation credit. It is going to cost about \$135 million or so, in a three-year period. That is not only going to help our seniors to ensure that they continue to live in their own homes as long as they want, but it also is going to create new jobs in an important construction sector in our province. It's a win-win situation: Not only do we

help our seniors, but we also help our construction sector by creating new jobs in other related industries.

That's something that we have to be very mindful of. I think, in these economic times, what we need to do is make and take responsible choices. We need to decide how we're going to spend our money—which is not our money; it's taxpayers' money, and we need to be very, very careful about that.

Now, I find it very ironic that just earlier this afternoon there was another motion, by the member from Cambridge, talking about fulfilling all promises of building hospitals. By the way, our government has built 18 hospitals over the last eight years and will continue to invest in our communities, not only in terms of building hospitals—as opposed to them closing hospitals—but also ensuring that we continue to build new schools and that we continue to implement full-day kindergarten in our communities.

I ask that member from Cambridge and all of their members: So, what would you like to have? Would you like to have this particular bill, this \$350 million taken out of the treasury in terms of an HST relief on home heating, or would you like to spend that money on building a hospital or two or ensuring that full-day kindergarten is available to our four- and five-year-olds across the province?

These are simple matters of choices that we need to really understand in these tough economic times. We do not have the luxury of spending money willy-nilly and being able to do things like there are no consequences. So if you want to make sure that we have got good health care, if we want to make sure that we have good education—and that's the second thing, Mr. Speaker, that my constituents spoke about in this last election: They wanted to make sure that we have a healthy economy and they wanted to make sure that we have good schools and hospitals, and that's where we should be making investments.

I, for one, will not be voting for this bill because I want to make sure that we continue to invest in our seniors, that we continue to invest in our health care, that we continue to invest in our education. I want to make sure that every single elementary school in my riding of Ottawa Centre has a full-day kindergarten program. I want to make sure that my inner-city schools are—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that it's somewhat surreal to see you in the chair. It seems a lot quieter on this side of the House with you up there. But I do want to congratulate you on your re-election and also ascending to the chair.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Leeds-Grenville: There seems to be a lot of talk about the decibel level projected by myself in past life. Things have changed, and I respectfully ask the member to go easy. Thank you.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Well, thank you for your leniency and understanding, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it.



I want to take this opportunity to commend the member for Algoma-Manitoulin on bringing Bill 4 to the floor today. I think it's very appropriate. You used words about setting the tone, and I can't agree with you more that this bill and co-operation from the opposition on this bill will really set the tone.

I know I've just been in this place for 20 months. I had a by-election on March 4, less than four months before the HST was enacted, and I can tell you that the same concern that I heard at the door in February and early March 2010 was even more amplified on July 1 of that year, when the HST came forward. This election that we just finished on October 6—it's not just the HST on heating. I had a 90-year-old man in a walker come to not just my campaign office but, after my election, to my constituency office expressing concern about the extra \$900 that the HST costs him on his funeral.

1610

You know, we had snow in eastern Ontario this week. Every single, solitary day this week in my constituency office in Leeds-Grenville, before both the snow hit the ground and after, we had people who couldn't pay their hydro bill, who didn't know how they were going to make ends meet to be able to deal with either a deposit or just the bill.

So when the government looks at us in opposition—and remember, we've got a couple more seats than you do—you have to realize that our constituents made it very clear to us that we're going to stand up. Right after the election, I had person after person, no matter where I was in my riding, in the urban or the rural area, say, "Don't give up the fight. We want that relief on our hydro bills."

And I know there are lots of fans in this chamber about our Changebook, and I'm not using this as a prop, Speaker. It's page 4—

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** It's a prop.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's not a prop. I've dropped it. Calm down. I know you're big fans. The member for Toronto Centre has a copy as well. I appreciate that you're reading it, sir, and I know deep, deep in your heart that there are sections in that beautiful document that you support.

But clearly, clearly, people told us they wanted relief. They were at their breaking point. They want that—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want some time.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** You'll get some time, the member for Durham.

I want to address just one thing that the member for Ottawa Centre talked about. He boasted about the healthy home renovation tax credit. I want to read to you, in my final comments, an email I received—they gave me permission to read it today—from Marcel and Ann Labelle from Brockville. The subject is "Healthy home renovation tax credit," which they call HHRTC:

"Please continue to press the Liberals to reduce heating costs by the 8% provincial portion of the HST. To us, this is preferable to the HHRTC if it becomes a choice between the two. We are seniors on a fixed

seniors pension and I have to work part-time at 68 years old with not too good health and at minimum wage just to barely survive on a daily basis. We own our home with a mortgage, and it is a continuous struggle to just make the mortgage payment, pay the monthly expenses of insurance, heat, hydro and water/sewer. There is no way we could afford to renovate anything and therefore could never take advantage of the HHRTC. The only way seniors such as ourselves can continue to live and maintain our homes is with reductions of taxes/fees that we are continually bombarded with and with no end in sight. I would agree to less 'non-essential' government-provided services if this would guarantee a lowering of present taxes/fees and, at the very minimum, no increases."

That's what seniors are saying, that they don't have \$10,000, and I wholeheartedly support Bill 4. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Speaker, I would like to continue this debate first by congratulating you on your appointment as Speaker. I'd like my honourable colleagues to know that I have come to know the honourable member, and he has tried to teach me everything he knows.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** But those who know me know I don't take advice very well.

It's truly an honour to be able to stand here to represent the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane. It's a very rural riding, and when I went door to door, people said, "Please, speak for me. Please, speak for me." Most of the people in my rural riding, or a large percentage, including myself, don't have access to natural gas. So we can have a big debate about natural gas, but a lot of people in my riding heat with oil. Oil is no deal.

I have an extremely high percentage of senior citizens in my riding. It's a rural riding. They live in rural houses. They are just getting by. For me to tell them, "You know what? Why don't you borrow another 10 grand and put in new windows?" when they can't pay their bills now—we can't keep going on like this.

I knocked on doors and had people cry because their overall cost of keeping their home was higher than their income. And they have no option, because there is no affordable housing for these people to go to. We are going to tell them to put in new windows and that's the answer to their problems.

I wholeheartedly support this bill on behalf of the citizens of my riding who can't pay their heating bills now. Some of them are going to have to pick. In my riding in January it's minus 40, so they're going to have to pick between heat and food. I hope the rest of the honourable members will please, please think of that when they support my honourable colleague's bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you. Again, I'd like to repeat what everyone has said: Nice to have you in the



chair, and certainly you won't be named when you're sitting there.

I'd also like to commend the member from Algoma-Manitoulin and his remarks. I think the way he expressed it—and the member who just spoke—indicated what most of us heard while we were campaigning this past fall. We were listening to the people of Ontario, and in fact this member has brought this forward out of respect for what we heard.

What is apparent here today is that the government side does not appear to be listening, once again. They're going to barge ahead and ignore the plight of seniors and people in parts of Ontario where heating their home is an absolutely essential necessity and an expensive option.

I was very impressed by the member from Nipissing, Mr. Fedeli, who remarked on the couple he visited who said they would save about \$240 a year, I believe it was. That money would find its way back into their grocery bill or their municipal taxes or having home improvements done to avoid future costs.

The real compliment here is that I believe the members in the NDP party have recognized the strength of our campaign. Tim Hudak had, on page 4—it's almost verbatim of the bill on page 4. I have the bill here, and it's almost word for word. I'm going to read what our Changebook said. It said, "We live in Canada. Heating our homes is not a luxury. Increasing the cost with a surprise tax increase is grossly unfair. We will remove the provincial portion of the HST from every home heating bill." So there's no surprise here that we support this bill.

I think it's important for the people of Ontario paying attention to this debate this afternoon that this is generally a free vote. There are members there from all over Ontario. The people of Ontario are counting on you, in this first week of this legislative session, to stand up for hard-working, ordinary people and give them some of the HST money back. That's what this debate is about: listening to people and voting for your constituents. Or are you going to obey the orders of the whip and Premier McGuinty and deny the people the least little break of \$80? We'll see how it's a bloc vote on that other side. But the majority of the people on this side are with the people of Ontario,

This is a very defining moment in this early stage of this 40th Parliament. The majority was not on the government side. The majority is the NDP and Tim Hudak and the Conservative Party together, supporting this legislation which gives relief to families. That's a principle that we stand on. This vote is really a principle, a voting on principle, of what we heard during the election.

I respect the Speaker here. I know the vote will be called on this and I'd expect it would be a recorded vote. I'd like to be on notice as saying I'm going to put an article in the paper this week indicating that this relief for families was denied by Premier McGuinty. That's the way I see it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has a two-minute response.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** How many minutes have we got left? Okay. Further debate? The member from Nickel Belt, who was trying before. I got mixed up because you mixed me up there.

1620

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'll take full responsibility for this. There were too many people standing in the way; I agree. They should be at their desks, listening to this very intense debate.

I don't share the doom and gloom of the last speaker. I think the people in this House will do the right thing. I think the people in this House will listen to their constituents and give them the relief that they have been asking for.

I represent the beautiful riding of Nickel Belt. This is the most beautiful riding of all 107, and I'm really happy that I've got it. There are 33 little communities. We don't have natural gas in most of Nickel Belt and I, like all of my constituents, tend to heat with oil. When the oil truck came down my little stretch of road this year, it was a bit of a shocker to get the first bill. The last time they came was in April, and they don't come from April all the way till the end of October. At the end of October, when it started to get cold, they came, and here was my bill: \$759. That was to fill up my tank for the first time of the winter.

But they will come back. Every month now, they will come back and fill up my tank because I heat with oil, like everybody else in Nickel Belt, because we don't have access to this ever-decreasing cost of natural gas.

I visit the 33 communities in Nickel Belt. I got to one of the communities, a beautiful community called Cartier. So I'm in Cartier and talking to the people there, and this lady comes to the door. I can tell by the home that she is from modest means, and when I see the Phentex slippers that have been patched in three different colours, I had a pretty good idea that she's not on the rich side.

She goes and gets her oil bill, and you know what, Mr. Speaker? It is identical to mine. She had a \$750 bill to fill up her oil tank. That's more than her pension. And that was just to fill up the tank. She knows that there will be another seven fill-ups coming up through the winter. Then, with her little glasses, she points to this; she points to the HST. She's not happy about this. She knows that this is a tax that was added. It was never there before. The cost of oil has gone through the roof. She hoped we could do something about that.

But she knows that we can do something about this HST. We could take \$50 off of her bill right here, right now, this afternoon, if you listen to your heart and if you listen to the people in your riding.

**M. Rosario Marchese:** En français.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je sais que vous avez tous eu la chance de vous promener dans vos comtés, puis de parler

avec vos constituants. Quand vous avez fait la campagne électorale qui vous a amené ici, je suis certaine que vous l'avez entendu. Tout le monde ici, on n'a pas peur de dire que lorsqu'on est allé cogner aux portes, les gens nous ont parlé de leurs factures. Ils nous ont parlé de leurs factures de chauffage. C'était l'automne. On commençait à ouvrir les systèmes de chauffage, puis on savait qu'il y avait la taxe de vente harmonisée qui avait été ajoutée aux frais de chauffage. De nous faire croire que vous ne l'avez pas entendu, c'est de dire que vous n'écoutez pas les Ontariens et les Ontariennes.

Ce qu'on vous demande aujourd'hui, c'est d'écouter les Ontariens et les Ontariennes et faire ce qu'ils vous demandent. Donnez-leur un petit break. C'est tout ce qu'ils vous demandent. Donnez-leur un petit break. On est capable de faire ça ici ensemble, si on travaille ensemble. Moi, je ne crois pas ce que le député a dit avant. Je crois qu'aujourd'hui, on va prendre la bonne décision parce que c'est la décision que les Ontariens et les Ontariennes nous demandent de prendre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** There being no time left, now the member from Algoma-Manitoulin has a two-minute response.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'll just do this briefly. I got a letter from a veteran and his heating bill or his oil bill. He took 492 units. The HST cost on it was \$40.90. The following month, he had to take an additional 225 units. It was \$18.68 for March and April. We're looking at \$62 in two months. This is for a veteran who has given his life to our country.

One last note—and, by the way, this is from a gentleman who is from Marathon, which is not in my riding. I know that the citizens who are in Algoma-Manitoulin, their messages—I haven't gotten back to my offices up in Elliot Lake, but they're there. I know I'm on the right path. We know we're on the right path.

I'll sum it up by an individual named Mr. John Parker, who sent me this letter from here in Toronto, and he sums it up quite eloquently: "... my high praise to you for attempting something sensible"—something sensible.

This is really something that we can achieve for all Ontarians. It doesn't have to be such a divisive issue every time we make a decision. It doesn't have to be this or that. Let's set the priorities. Let's set Ontario on the right path. Let's move forward. Let's give Ontarians a break. The last time I checked with the people in Algoma-Manitoulin, when I was knocking on their doors—I'm doing what they told me to do.

To my friends across the way, I look forward to working on many common goals. I also look forward to working with my friend from Nipissing.

To my friends across the way on that side, there's one thing you need to remember: Algoma-Manitoulin is on this side. It's no longer on that side; it's on this side, and I hear what they're telling me.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Consideration—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I don't know if we're going to prolong this debate or not, but I do believe the member from Niagara Falls wanted to speak to this bill, so if we could—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** That's not a point of order. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier today in the Ottawa Citizen there appeared to have been either a mistake by the government or a change to composition. It said that the member from—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** That's not a point of order.

Consideration of private members' public business has concluded before the expiry of the two and a half hours allotted. This House is therefore suspended until 4:32 p.m., at which time I'll be putting the question to the House.

*The House suspended proceedings from 1627 to 1632.*

## HOSPITALS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. Mr. Leone has moved private member's notice of motion number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I believe I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

We will dispense with that at the end of the session.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We'll deal with it.

## YORK REGION TRANSIT LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL AU SEIN DES SERVICES DE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN DE LA RÉGION DE YORK

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Shurman has moved second reading of Bill 7. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

This will be postponed until the moment of the end of the session.

I'll have to defer to my friend from Simcoe-Grey, who has this down pat.



RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT  
(HST REBATE FOR HOME  
HEATING), 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL  
(REMBOURSEMENT DE LA TVH  
POUR LE CHAUFFAGE DOMESTIQUE)

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Mantha has moved second reading of Bill 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I did hear a no.

All in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

It's so close. I believe the ayes have it.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I think you've got five. We will call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1634 to 1639.*

HOSPITALS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We'll now deal with ballot item number 1, Mr. Leone's private notice of motion number 1. Please rise and remain standing for yea.

**Ayes**

Armstrong, Teresa J.  
Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Bisson, Gilles  
Campbell, Sarah  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Fedeli, Victor  
Forster, Cindy  
Gélinas, France  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Michael  
Hillier, Randy  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Rod  
Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Leone, Rob  
MacLaren, Jack  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Mantha, Michael  
Marchese, Rosario  
McDonell, Jim  
McKenna, Jane  
McNaughton, Monte  
Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul  
Milligan, Rob E.  
Munro, Julia  
Natyshak, Taras  
Nicholls, Rick

O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Pettapiece, Randy  
Prue, Michael  
Schein, Jonah  
Scott, Laurie  
Shurman, Peter  
Singh, Jagmeet  
Smith, Todd  
Tabuns, Peter  
Taylor, Monique  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Vanthof, John  
Walker, Bill  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakabuski, John  
Yurek, Jeff

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoskins, Eric  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kwinter, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
Mangat, Amrit  
Mauro, Bill  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil

Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Oraziatti, David  
Piruzza, Teresa  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Sorbara, Greg  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Wong, Soo  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 54; the nays are 50.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

YORK REGION TRANSIT LABOUR  
DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT  
DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL  
AU SEIN DES SERVICES  
DE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN  
DE LA RÉGION DE YORK

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Shurman has moved second reading of Bill 7. Is it the pleasure of the House—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote?

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those in favour, rise and remain standing, please.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Fedeli, Victor  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Michael  
Hillier, Randy  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Rod

Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Leone, Rob  
MacLaren, Jack  
MacLeod, Lisa  
McDonell, Jim  
McKenna, Jane  
McNaughton, Monte  
Miller, Norm  
Milligan, Rob E.  
Munro, Julia  
Nicholls, Rick  
O'Toole, John

Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Pettapiece, Randy  
Scott, Laurie  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Todd  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Walker, Bill  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakabuski, John  
Yurek, Jeff

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, rise and remain standing, please.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura  
Armstrong, Teresa J.  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Bisson, Gilles  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Campbell, Sarah  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Duguid, Brad

Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Forster, Cindy  
Gerretsen, John  
Gélinas, France  
Gravelle, Michael  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hoskins, Eric  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kwinter, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
Mangat, Amrit  
Mantha, Michael  
Marchese, Rosario  
Mauro, Bill  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Paul  
Milloy, John

Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Natyshak, Taras  
Oraziatti, David  
Piruzza, Teresa  
Prue, Michael  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Sandals, Liz  
Schein, Jonah  
Sergio, Mario  
Singh, Jagmeet  
Sorbara, Greg  
Sousa, Charles  
Tabuns, Peter  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Taylor, Monique  
Vanthof, John  
Wong, Soo  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 37; the nays are 67.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negated.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We'll have the doors open for 30 seconds.

RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT  
(HST REBATE FOR HOME  
HEATING), 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL  
(REMBOURSEMENT DE LA TVH  
POUR LE CHAUFFAGE DOMESTIQUE)

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Mantha has moved second reading of Bill 4. All those in favour, please stand and remain standing.

**Ayes**

Armstrong, Teresa J.  
Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Bisson, Gilles  
Campbell, Sarah  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Fedeli, Victor  
Forster, Cindy  
Gélinas, France  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Michael  
Hillier, Randy  
Horwath, Andrea

Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Rod  
Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Leone, Rob  
MacLaren, Jack  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Mantha, Michael  
Marchese, Rosario  
McDonell, Jim  
McKenna, Jane  
McNaughton, Monte  
Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul  
Milligan, Rob E.  
Munro, Julia  
Natyshak, Taras  
Nicholls, Rick

O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Pettapiece, Randy  
Prue, Michael  
Schein, Jonah  
Scott, Laurie  
Shurman, Peter  
Singh, Jagmeet  
Smith, Todd  
Tabuns, Peter  
Taylor, Monique  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Vanthof, John  
Walker, Bill  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakubski, John  
Yurek, Jeff

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Bradley, James J.  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoskins, Eric  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kwinter, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
Mangat, Amrit  
Mauro, Bill  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil

Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Oraziotti, David  
Piruzza, Teresa  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Sorbara, Greg  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Wong, Soo  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 54; the nays are 50.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The bill is ordered for the Committee of the Whole House.

**Interjections: No.**

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I refer it to the justice policy committee.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is the majority of the House in favour of that move? Agreed? Agreed. So be it.

The time for private members' public business having expired, it's time for orders of the day.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*The House adjourned at 1654.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	











## Public transit

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	61
------------------------	----

## Education funding

Mr. Joe Dickson .....	61
-----------------------	----

## RM Auto Restoration and RM Classic Cars

Mr. Rick Nicholls .....	62
-------------------------	----

## Committee membership

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	62
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	63

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

### York Region Transit Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011, Bill 7, Mr. Shurman / Loi de 2011 sur le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des services de transport en commun de la région de York, projet de loi 7, M. Shurman

First reading agreed to .....	63
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	63

### Ontario One Call Act, 2011, Bill 8, Mr. Bailey, Mr. P. Miller / Loi de 2011 sur Ontario One Call, projet de loi 8, M. Bailey, M. P. Miller

First reading agreed to .....	63
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	63

## MOTIONS

### Private members' public business

Hon. John Milloy .....	64
Motion agreed to .....	64

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

### Services en français / French-language services

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	64
M. Peter Shurman .....	65
Mme France Gélinas .....	65

### Woman Abuse Prevention Month / Mois de la prévention de la violence faite aux femmes

Hon. John Milloy .....	66
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	66
Ms. Laurie Scott .....	67
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	67

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Wind turbines

Mr. Toby Barrett .....	68
------------------------	----

### Lyme disease

Mr. Steve Clark .....	68
-----------------------	----

### Diagnostic services

Mme France Gélinas .....	68
--------------------------	----

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

### Hospitals

Mr. Rob Leone .....	69
Mme France Gélinas .....	70
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	71
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	72
Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	73
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	73
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	74
Mr. Rob Leone .....	75

### York Region Transit Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011, Bill 7, Mr. Shurman / Loi de 2011 sur le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des services de transport en commun de la région de York, projet de loi 7, M. Shurman

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	75
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	77
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	78
Mr. Frank Klees .....	78
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	79
Mr. Reza Moridi .....	80
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	81
Mr. Greg Sorbara .....	81
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	82

### Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (HST Rebate for Home Heating), 2011, Bill 4, Mr. Mantha / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail (remboursement de la TVH pour le chauffage domestique), projet de loi 4, M. Mantha

Mr. Michael Mantha .....	82
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	84
Mr. Victor Fedeli .....	85
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	85
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	86
Mr. Steve Clark .....	86
Mr. John Vanthof .....	87
Mr. John O'Toole .....	87
Mme France Gélinas .....	88
Mr. Michael Mantha .....	89

## **Hospitals**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)..... 89

### **York Region Transit Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011, Bill 7, Mr. Shurman / Loi de 2011 sur le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des services de transport en commun de la région de York, projet de loi 7, M. Shurman**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)..... 89

### **Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (HST Rebate for Home Heating), 2011, Bill 4, Mr. Mantha / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail (remboursement de la TVH pour le chauffage domestique), projet de loi 4, M. Mantha**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)..... 90

## **Hospitals**

Motion agreed to..... 90

### **York Region Transit Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011, Bill 7, Mr. Shurman / Loi de 2011 sur le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des services de transport en commun de la région de York, projet de loi 7, M. Shurman**

Second reading negatived..... 91

### **Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (HST Rebate for Home Heating), 2011, Bill 4, Mr. Mantha / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail (remboursement de la TVH pour le chauffage domestique), projet de loi 4, M. Mantha**

Second reading agreed to..... 91



# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 24 November 2011 / Jeudi 24 novembre 2011

## Withdrawal of Bill 3

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	43
------------------------------------	----

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Throne speech debate

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	43
Debate adjourned .....	49

### Wearing of ribbons

Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	49
----------------------------	----

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	49
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	49
Ms. Tracy MacCharles .....	49
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	49

### Legislative pages

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	50
------------------------------------	----

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Government spending

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	50
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	50

### Government spending

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	51
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	51

### Government spending

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	52
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	52

### Taxation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	52
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	53

### Government spending

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	54
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	54

### Economic outlook and fiscal review

Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	54
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	54

### Economic development

Ms. Tracy MacCharles .....	55
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	55

## Economic outlook and fiscal review

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	55
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	56

## Taxation

Mr. Michael Mantha.....	56
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	56

## Power plant

Ms. Dipika Damerla .....	57
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	57

## Red tape reduction

Mr. Monte McNaughton .....	57
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	57

## Children's health services

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	58
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	58

## Employment standards

Mr. David Zimmer .....	58
Hon. Linda Jeffrey .....	58

## Public transit

Mr. Frank Klees .....	59
Hon. Linda Jeffrey .....	59

## Estimates

Hon. John Milloy .....	59
------------------------	----

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	60
------------------------	----

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Brent McKague / Tammy Fischer

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	60
----------------------------	----

### Second Chance Pet Network

Ms. Sarah Campbell .....	60
--------------------------	----

### St. John's Rehab Hospital

Mr. David Zimmer .....	60
------------------------	----

### Automotive industry

Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	60
----------------------	----

### Events in Tibet

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	61
-----------------------	----

### Diabetes Awareness Month

Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	61
--------------------------	----

*Continued on inside back cover*

20N  
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No. 5



N° 5

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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
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(Hansard)**

**Monday 28 November 2011**

**Lundi 28 novembre 2011**



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 28 November 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 28 novembre 2011

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Let us pray.

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in a moment of silence for reflection.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to welcome the chicken industry's Team Ontario representatives of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario and the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors, who are here with us today.

Tim Hudak and I are looking forward to meeting with them this afternoon. I hope all members will take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about Ontario's chicken industry and enjoy some chicken wings during their reception this evening in the legislative dining room. We welcome you there too, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, member.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am delighted to introduce Derek Thompson. Derek is a GO Transit customer service ambassador. On September 7, Derek saved a life by using an automated defibrillator on a rider who had gone into cardiac arrest. Please welcome Derek Thompson.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** We have the Nature Conservancy Canada holding a reception this morning in committee room 230, immediately following question period. We have a number of their key people here. I want to introduce them: Margaret Kelch, chair of Nature Conservancy Ontario; James Duncan, the Ontario vice-president; and board members Gary Goldberg, Garry Innanen and Ted Ecclestone.

I certainly want to invite members to enjoy some food, and learn about the good work that Nature Conservancy Ontario and Canada is doing in ridings across the province to help protect and nurture Ontario's natural treasures. Also, they can pick up a nice, free 12-inch white pine, which I know all members will want to get.

Please welcome the members of Nature Conservancy Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions? The member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations on your recent election.

Today, I have guests coming from the Terry Fox Public School junior choir, who will be singing in the corridor around 12:15. I would encourage all members to take

the time to watch them, because they will be doing an amazing performance.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'm pleased to add my additional greeting this morning to Team Ontario. As you know, Mr. Speaker, Ontario is the largest processor and consumer of chicken in the country, and our government is very, very proud to support them.

So this morning, I want to introduce everybody, but I do want to introduce—and it's an interesting occasion, because this morning we have both the chicken farmers and the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors working in tandem.

The chairman of the chicken farmers, Murray Booy, is here—Murray, welcome—and Reg Cliche, the chairman of the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors. Welcome to you and all your colleagues. Thank you very much for being here.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'm very pleased to introduce a good friend and the president and vice-chancellor of Lakehead University, Dr. Brian Stevenson. Welcome, Brian.

Of course, as everybody knows, Lakehead University will be the site of the first law school ever in northern Ontario and the first one in Ontario in 43 years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Acting Premier.

Acting Premier, you have a spending crisis in the province of Ontario. In fact, if there was a ministry of interest payments, it would be the third-largest ministry in all of government, just behind health and education.

Minister, it's time to take action today to rein in the runaway costs of the McGuinty government. Don't you think it reasonable—I'll ask you again—to extend your public sector wage freeze from simply putting it on non-union employees and, making it fair for everyone, make sure we spread it out to all public sector employees? If we want to preserve public services for generations to come, isn't this an important and fair step to take today?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First, I would characterize the fact that we have managed to keep the deficit coming down in each of the last two years as an important achievement, Mr. Speaker. Last year the deficit figure came in, as a result of some one-time transfers, better



than had been anticipated, but we are still right on target with what we laid out two years ago in the 2010 budget. Compare that, for instance, with the federal government, who announced last week that they are now extending their date to balance, Mr. Speaker. Governments in the western—and by the way, my guess is that they're going to extend it another year, because their numbers, according to the Parliamentary Budget Office, just don't work up.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with the public and broader public sectors, with management, with unions and, most importantly, with the people of Ontario as we move back to budget.

What I can say to the Leader of the Opposition is that we will reject the types of practices that he had when he was part of a government that slashed and burned and undermined confidence—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Thank you, Speaker. I think in making his comparisons, the minister should be accurate: The federal deficit is actually heading down, while the deficit of the province of Ontario is actually heading up.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The minister shakes his head. We were here last Wednesday when you indicated the deficit was \$14 billion last year, and now it's over \$16 billion this year. That's up in the province of Ontario, when families want it to go down.

Let me give you another angle here, Minister: Statistics Canada came out, at the end of the week, and said that for the first time ever, wages in Saskatchewan are higher than wages in Ontario. In fact, under the McGuinty government this past year, wages have gone down for private sector workers in the province of Ontario. So Minister, if private sector workers are seeing their wages go down, isn't it fair and reasonable that public sector workers should have their wages frozen to help us balance the books?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the provincial economy is experiencing growth again this year. In fact, the deficit is coming down. It's down from a high of \$24.7 billion. So what the Leader of the Opposition says is factually incorrect. He's right: The deficit last year came in lower than had been anticipated as a result of one-time transactions; for instance, Mr. Speaker, we helped Chrysler and General Motors and kept 400,000 people working.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there are enormous challenges in the economy today, both nationally and provincially. Saskatchewan is benefiting, obviously, from the potash industry and natural gas. I think if we look at things realistically, we might also want to take into account that this year Ontario's eighth grade students are leading the country in math and writing.

1040

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of difficult choices ahead. I look forward to working with the leader of the opposition using facts—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I would expect that those grade 8 students would know that the deficit went up from \$14 billion to \$16 billion. They would know that's actually an increase, to say the least, Minister of Finance.

Minister, let's get back to the facts of the matter here. Statistics Canada said something very alarming this past week, and I'll repeat it for you: Ontario's wages actually went down by 1.3% compared to last year. In fact, only Ontario and Nova Scotia, of all the provinces, saw their pay packets decrease. Families are struggling to make ends meet, Minister, but you're seeing public sector agreements that are way out of line with what families are able to pay.

So let me appeal to your sense of fairness. Since every dollar the government spends was earned by a hard-working taxpayer, if they're actually seeing less in their pockets, isn't it just fair and reasonable to have a public sector wage freeze to help us balance the books in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hard-working doctors in this province, the hard-working teachers, the hard-working public servants who are employed throughout Ontario and spending their wages in our communities. In many of our communities, the public and broader public sectors remain the largest employers.

I won't participate in the exercise the member opposite wants to, and that is to scapegoat public servants and others as a result of the current economic situation.

Mr. Speaker, we will be continuing to move forward as we plan for the next budget. I look forward to the input of the official opposition and the third party, but I think what is important is that we all need to work together. To that extent, I would agree with the member opposite. We are all going to have difficult choices to make, and I look forward, as we move forward, to working together with all Ontarians.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Acting Premier on the same topic of the necessity of a public sector wage freeze—as other provinces have brought in, as President Obama has brought in for his national government workers, as Prime Minister Cameron has brought in to the United Kingdom. Certainly, as a son of teachers, I'm proud to say that we appreciate the hard work of our public servants in the province of Ontario. But it seems, though, Speaker, that when it comes to the McGuinty Liberals, they only seem to appreciate the members of the Working Families Coalition, who spent some \$9 million in negative attack ads. I guess that's the quid pro quo; that's the "I rub your back, you'll rub mine."

But if you truly don't want to divide Ontarians, if you truly feel like you should treat everybody equally, then let me ask you again: If you believe in this principle of equality, why do you have one policy for non-union workers and a completely different policy for union



workers? Shouldn't it be the same? Minister, won't you do the right thing and bring in a public sector wage freeze to ensure we get spending under control?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, we will continue to make the choices that are important to move Ontario forward. I'm glad to hear the leader of the third party acknowledge his support for our teachers—and I take it now that they're advocating a wage freeze for both the public and broader public sectors, which they have conveniently not been clear about in this discussion to date.

There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, there are difficult choices. We've made some over the last few years. It wasn't easy. When we were called upon by the IMF to invest 2% to 3% of GDP into stimulus at the time of the downturn. Those weren't easy choices. It wasn't easy when we decided to move forward with our tax plan for jobs and growth, which is being hailed right across the country in terms of its effectiveness in making us an efficient tax jurisdiction. We'll continue to work together with all Ontarians, Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, Speaker, the Acting Premier says that they need to make difficult choices. The problem is, among the choices you continue to pick “none of the above.” That's why we're now in a \$16-billion hole this year, a deeper hole than we were in last year, and Premier McGuinty will actually double the size of the debt in the province of Ontario in his term of office. That means every dollar we pay to debt interest could have been money to go to health care, it could have been money to help in the classroom, it could have been money to invest in roads and bridges, but now it's going increasingly into interest on the debt. You have to start saying no, once in a while. You have to draw the line somewhere, and you have to make decisions based on an essential principle of fairness.

Minister, if families in the private sector have seen their wages decline, if seniors and retirees are basically seeing their pensions frozen, isn't it fair and reasonable to ensure that public sector wages are similarly frozen so we can get the books back in balance in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** When this government moved to reduce the price of generic drugs, that leader and his party sided with the big drug companies. That was half a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have continued to make the right choices. We want to make sure that as we move forward and we get back to balance, we create a more efficient and fair broader public sector. These are difficult choices. When given a chance, that leader—his party—chose the big drug companies and rejected Ontario's citizens. We stand with the people of Ontario, not the big drug companies.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** At a time when we have a serious debt crisis in the province of Ontario, Ontario families

expect a serious answer and a serious plan from the Minister of Finance, not the silly answer he just gave there, Speaker.

It's a very straight proposition. StatsCanada sadly reports that Ontario saw its wages decline last year. The province had always been the engine of Confederation; the best place, actually, to get a good job and raise your family. Under this government, we're one of only two provinces that have gone backward. We need to fix that. We need good private sector jobs in our province, but we also need to catch up, to get the books back in order; otherwise, future services will be jeopardized.

So, Minister, at a time when families have had to cut back and seniors have had to make do on fixed incomes, why are you giving big increases to the unions that financed your campaign? Isn't it time to bring in a public sector wage freeze across the board that's fair and reasonable?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House think the generic drug policy and access to generic drugs at a reasonable price is a very serious issue. I shouldn't be surprised at that callous comment the Leader of the Opposition made.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have taken decisive steps to move forward. What I can tell the Leader of the Opposition is, there is more work to be done, not just in this budget but over the next five years as we move back to balance, and as we retool the public and broader public sectors to better serve people, but most importantly to preserve access to the best health care and education systems in the world.

I am proud that every credit rating agency has maintained our credit rating through this downturn. I'm proud of what Forbes magazine and others have said about the competitiveness. Most of all, I'm proud to be an Ontarian, proud of the strength of our economy and proud of our leading role in the Canadian economy.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. What kind of message does paying Don Drummond \$1,500 a day send to families and public service workers?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we engaged Mr. Drummond last spring to give us good advice. We see this expenditure as an important investment. We think it makes good sense to get that kind of advice from somebody who has had experience in the private sector and experience in the public sector as a former senior official at the federal Department of Finance. At the end of the day, we think that's money well spent. We think it's important to have that kind of advice.

There are three other members of that commission, all from the Ontario broader public sector, who are providing not only good advice to the government but to the Legislature as we move forward.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Fifteen hundred dollars a day is eight times the pay of an average worker in this province and nearly 20 times the pay of somebody who is making minimum wage. How can the Deputy Premier expect everyday people to believe this province is actually in tough times when he's cutting huge cheques to the very person who's drawing up the plans for the belt-tightening?

1050

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I read the leader's comments earlier today so I did a little bit of research and found out that her office and party operation cost the taxpayers \$2,700 a day. I think your supporters think that's money that's well spent.

You may want to make fun of Mr. Drummond, you may not want to invite good advice, but when you look at those kinds of numbers, everything's got to be kept in its proper perspective. We welcome Mr. Drummond's work. He's being appropriately compensated for the work. That work will help inform the decisions that this Legislature takes moving forward.

I would invite the leader of the third party to take his advice seriously. There will be things I'm sure she doesn't support. Hopefully some things she will. We look forward to receiving the report of the commission. It could turn out to be one of the most important commissions ever engaged by this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Hospital CEOs or consultants leading a commission can rest easy that their pay and bonuses are going to be secure. And of course, Bay Street bankers know that their corporate tax giveaways aren't going anywhere.

Why is it that the only people being asked to make sacrifices are those who can least afford them right now?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I was quite pleased on November 17 when the leader of the third party said, "My meeting with Mr. Drummond, I found it a very productive conversation." I would invite her to work with us. I mean, you can take these numbers and manipulate them to make it look like nobody's hurting more than the people she pretends to speak to.

Mr. Drummond's work is important. The people who are giving us advice, all three other members of the commission, are people who are thoughtful, who understand the importance of the work we're doing.

I look forward to her continuing to engage in this conversation. I think the money is well spent. I look forward to the commission report, I look forward to a legislative committee responding to it, and I hope we'll be able to find some areas where we can agree to move forward together.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Acting Premier. The Premier is in London today making

new promises about jobs. Can the Acting Premier tell us what happened to the \$7 million the government gave to Global Sticks Inc.?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Research.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I assume this is going to be an ongoing tirade we're going to hear from the leader of the third party every couple of weeks when a company has some challenges, a company that we may have had some involvement with in terms of trying to help them create jobs.

The fact is, the dollars we invest, whether it be in research and innovation companies, whether it be in some of our regional economic development funds, whether it be in some of our funds to try to attract investment to Ontario—some of those companies may not fare that well. The majority of those companies fare very well; the majority of those companies create jobs.

It takes a little bit of courage for a government to make these kinds of investments, but we're going to stand up for Ontario companies. We're going to stand by the job creation that's being created.

My question for the leader of the third party is, does she have the intestinal fortitude to support these kinds of investments?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, with very much fanfare the government gave Global Sticks \$7 million in grants and promised 130 permanent jobs. Instead, it closed its doors and some of the workers are saying they haven't even been paid. Navistar in Chatham received a grant of over \$30 million, only to shed 1,000 jobs away. Silicon Knights in St. Catharines received a grant of \$2.5 million and just slashed their workforce by half.

Why is it that money that's supposed to be creating jobs is getting handed to companies that are laying people off?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Judging by that question, I can see what the NDP strategy for job creation is in this province and it's to do nothing—just leave those companies hanging out to dry, just leave the workers and the potential to work in partnership with the private sector, to build jobs in this province—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:**—just leave them out there unemployed.

We're not going to do that. We're investing in the fundamentals to build a strong economy. That includes partnerships with private sector companies to build up our economic prospects to create jobs; it includes building a strong education system; it includes investing in infrastructure; it includes investing in a competitive tax environment.

What we're doing in this province is investing in the fundamentals to build a strong economy. It's obvious the NDP aren't up to that job. Mr. Speaker. We're determined to get that job done.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Premier's very, very good at promising jobs and he's even better at handing money away with no strings attached, but the only people who seem to have a job guarantee around here are the people who are paid to set up the photo ops for the Premier as he travels the province.

What job guarantees are being demanded in exchange for the millions that this government is giving away?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm really pleased to be able to share with the leader of the third party that the Premier is in London today making a very important announcement, because southwestern Ontario—particularly London, but southwestern Ontario in general—has had some challenging times. The Premier is there to tell the people of southwestern Ontario, the workers of southwestern Ontario, that we're going to stand with them, because as our economy improves here throughout Ontario, we want to make sure that southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario are benefiting from that growth. There is not a part in this province that we don't care about.

So I'll be looking to the leader of the third party to see if she really cares about workers in the coming weeks; to see if she's going to support our efforts to help grow the economy in southwestern Ontario, to help grow the economy in eastern Ontario, to continue to invest in our projects that are growing the economy in northern Ontario and to help invest in workers and jobs right across this province.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier a question but he doesn't seem to think it's necessary to be here—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member does know better, and I would ask all members to remember that we do not do that here in the House—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, sorry.

I would wish that everyone would abide by that long-standing tradition that we do not mention anyone's absence, because sometimes it may back up and bite you. I would respectfully request also that when somebody does ask a question, you use your inside voices.

The member from Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance.

During the recent recession, families and businesses all took a hit. They dealt with layoffs, they dealt with lower pay, they dealt with anxiety about their future—they still are. In other words, the private sector made sacrifices and difficult choices to make it through these turbulent times. Minister, is it not fair and is it not reasonable to ask government workers to do the same and forgo a raise this time around?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, in fact, the broader public sector has been reduced in size. Wage settlements relative to the private sector are actually now lower in collective bargaining environments.

There's no question that many people have had to deal with the consequences of the downturn. That's why we're focused on job creation. That's why we are focused on getting back to balance and why we're focused on making sure that government provides programs and services more efficiently and effectively.

We took the first steps in our 2010 budget; we did more in the 2011 budget. I say to the member opposite and his colleagues: We will be moving forward again in the next budget. I look forward to his input and I look forward to the input of the caucus opposite, as well as of the Drummond commission and, indeed, of all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Minister, all we're asking for is that government employees do what the private sector has done: to recognize the \$16-billion deficit we're facing and temporarily forgo getting another raise.

Unless strong action is taken on the deficit, all of the things we truly need and value, like health care and education, will be put at risk, and you know this. That's why we think it is fair and reasonable to ask government workers to forgo a raise. Why will you not do the same?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, in the public and broader public sectors we've seen reductions in the number of employees. We've seen the rates of settlement come down quite dramatically.

1100

The member opposite is right: We did freeze the non-bargained sector. There will need to be more things done, I suspect, as we move into the future. We are committed to doing that with the ultimate goal of protecting and enhancing those vital public services that are so important to all Ontarians: education and health care.

We've created, I think, the most efficient, effective tax system in North America. We need to do the same thing on the expenditure side, because we, on this side of the House, are absolutely dedicated to ensuring that the gains we've made in education and health care since that party was thrown out of office aren't lost as a result of bad decisions made in haste.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: The Toronto Transit Commission is proposing to reduce services to over 60 streetcar and bus routes, starting in January, while hiking fares by another 10 cents. Service cuts will hit some of Toronto's busiest routes, including the Dufferin bus and the Queen streetcar.

Will the minister work with Toronto to find a way to prevent these cuts, or will she stand by while transit users pay more and wait longer for buses and streetcars in our city?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Welcome to the Legislature. It's great to have you here.



I just want to say that what we will do is we will continue to invest billions of dollars building transit in Toronto. We are going to continue to complete the air-rail link from Pearson to Union Station. We are going to invest in the Eglinton-Scarborough cross-town line. That is under way right now. And we are going to complete the extension of the Spadina expressway up into York region by 2015.

The investments in transit in Toronto are unprecedented. More funding, more capital dollars have gone into Toronto to build transit now than for a generation. I think the member opposite needs to understand that members of your party have stood in opposition to those investments over and over and over again, which is a travesty, really, coming from the NDP. So we will continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Everyone loses when public transit service is cut. Riders wait longer, traffic is worse for motorists and children and seniors breathe more pollution.

Speaker, the provincial government used to fund half of the operating costs for the TTC, and today its support has dropped to one third of that level. Why won't the ministry commit to work with the city of Toronto and to find a joint solution to avoid these harmful transit cuts?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think, Mr. Speaker—the city of Toronto is going to work out its budget issues. We are going to watch that budget process unfold.

But the credibility gap between what this party has advocated for, in terms of keeping more cars on the road, not taking cars off the road, not investing in transit, not putting people in trains, not making sure that people can get out of their cars and get into transit—because the reality is, the city of Toronto would never have been able to invest in those transit builds if the province hadn't stepped up to the plate.

I fully expected when we did that that the NDP would be there with us, shoulder to shoulder, supporting those investments. To my surprise, they were not there. As a Toronto citizen, it shocks me that they were not more supportive of those investments.

So, we're going to continue those builds. We're going to make sure that there is more transit in Toronto so people in Toronto can get out of their cars and get on transit, in spite of what the NDP—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Speaker, as you know, Ottawa Centre is home to many new immigrants. We, in my community, are very proud to welcome people from all different parts of the world, who contribute both economically and socially to our community.

Speaker, I can tell you as an immigrant myself that it is a daunting challenge for newcomers to integrate eco-

nomically and socially in our communities, and we have to collectively do our utmost best to ensure that our newcomers get the opportunities that they so much deserve, so that they can benefit our communities.

Many settlement agencies in my riding of Ottawa Centre do excellent work in providing front-line services for those communities. We were really concerned when we saw the federal government cutting \$31 million unilaterally from Ontario. I want to know from the minister how it's going to affect Ontarians.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you to the member for Ottawa Centre for the question. He has been a real champion for newcomers, and we appreciate all you've done.

For the second year in a row, the federal government is cutting funding to Ontario's newcomers. This decrease of \$31 million will hit newcomers in this province especially hard at a time when many of them are looking for work. As a result, tens of thousands of new Ontarians will lose access to the vital services they need to succeed and contribute to our economy.

The federal government has cut Ontario's settlement funding by over \$75 million in the last two years. These cuts also come in the wake of not living up to their promised funding under the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, which shortchanges Ontario's newcomers by over \$200 million.

Ontario remains the number one destination for immigrants coming to Canada. We take 42% of immigrants and make up only 39% of the population. These unfair cut will deny thousands of newcomers access to services—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Through you, Speaker, thanks to the minister for the answer.

These cuts in funding are going to significantly impact agencies like the Catholic Immigration Centre, OCISO, and many more in my community of Ottawa and Ottawa Centre tremendously. It's going to impact our newcomers, and it's going to deny them opportunities, especially in these tough economic times.

Speaker, what we need is a stable, sustainable agreement from the federal government with the province of Ontario so that we can continue to provide these very important settlement services for our newcomers. Newcomers who come to Ontario deserve equal treatment from the federal government.

Minister, if a new agreement is so critical to the integration and success of our newcomers, what is the status of negotiating a new agreement with the federal government?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I absolutely agree with the member. The bottom line is that the federal government needs to come to the table to negotiate a new agreement. We need a fair deal like that which they have with BC, Manitoba and Quebec.

More than 40% of all immigrants to Canada choose Ontario as their home, and thousands more want to come to this province, but federal selection programs don't

respond to Ontario's labour market needs. We need the federal government to maintain current funding levels in order to make sure new immigrants can find good-paying jobs in Ontario.

Immigration is a shared responsibility, and the federal government is not living up to its commitments. Thousands of people destined for Ontario are stuck in huge application backlogs that force many to wait as much as seven years before they can set foot in our province. We cannot continue to allow the federal government to unilaterally determine such an important part of Ontario's economic recovery and its economic future.

Immigrants are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Premier. This past weekend we learned that 11 employees of Ontario Power Generation's Pickering plant were fired for alleged violations of the company's code of conduct. However, OPG has refused to disclose the nature of the alleged offences, only saying the firings were a result of the potential violation of the code of conduct.

Speaker, the code covers ethical business practices, conflicts of interest and managing sensitive information of the nuclear power plant.

Deputy Premier, will you lift the shroud of secrecy that seems to prevail in your government and press OPG to reveal the nature of the violation that resulted in this mass dismissal?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the situation is a human relations matter; it may still be subject to litigation.

What I can say is this: that the employees were found in breach of the code of conduct; the member has already described what those breaches were. I am assured that in no way was this related to safety at all. These matters are being appropriately dealt with by the staff and board at Ontario Power Generation. Beyond being able to assure the member that no safety issues were involved, because of the potential for litigation, it would not be appropriate to comment beyond that at this point in time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, first we're not allowed to know the cost of the Oakville power plant, then we're kept in the dark about the cost to cancel the Mississauga power plant, and now the public isn't being told the whole story about the mass firing of employees at the Pickering nuclear plant. Certainly, any conduct that would result in dismissal at a nuclear facility is of grave concern to the public, and they have a right to know.

1110

Deputy Premier, when are you going to change this culture of secrecy that prevails in your government and give Ontarians the information they have a right to know regarding these violations?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member is new, Mr. Speaker, but let me remind him about a little history of transparency at Ontario Power Generation. The government that preceded us refused to make OPG subject to freedom of information. When we did that, we found out a lot of really interesting things—untendered contracts and hundreds of thousands of dollars going to former staff members of the government of the day. There were all kinds of hidden things. They had booths at the Air Canada Centre—it was appalling.

I'm glad we brought freedom of information to OPG and Hydro One. I even remember that the former CEO of Hydro One, under their government, had a yacht.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I can't recall what it was called.

We brought freedom of information. I can assure the people of Ontario that the code covers a wide range of staff behaviour—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Acting Premier. The slowdown has hit London hard—some 25 now out of work and an unemployment rate over 9%, well above the provincial average. Windsor's unemployment rate is back over 10%.

Today, the Premier is unveiling a new economic development fund. How can—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Here's my question: How can families in London, Windsor and the region be sure that this is about creating and protecting jobs over the long run and not just another McGuinty-style photo op?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that the Premier of Ontario is in London today and I'm proud that my colleague will be introducing legislation later this week. I look forward to your support.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker: The member's leader got up a couple of questions ago and asked us why we were helping companies. Now, she's getting up and saying we should be helping companies. There's no question that some of those investments don't work out, no question about that. But I think of Ford, Chrysler and General Motors in my community that benefited from this government's help and the federal government's help. Your party did not support that.

We'll continue to work with London, with Windsor, with rural southwestern Ontario and with Kitchener-Waterloo to help transition back to a prosperous and growing economy. That's what we've been doing, that's our obligation as a government, and I'm glad to hear you're going to support the bill when it's introduced later this week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** This government has a bad track record on this file. When the forestry sector



was in trouble up north they announced \$500 million in assistance, but they left half of it in the bank account. In the southwest, Navistar took millions of dollars from the province, but it shut its doors and headed to the States.

Will the minister assure southwestern Ontario families that any funding announcements will come with long-term job guarantees?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What I can say to the member opposite is I look forward to her voting in favour of the bill that will create the southwestern Ontario economic development corporation.

I can also tell her that I'm proud of the work our members have done throughout the southwest in helping the auto sector come back, Mr. Speaker. It has not been easy; I agree. My community led unemployment in this country for a very long time, but it is coming back. It's coming back in part because we stepped up to the plate with Chrysler and with General Motors. It's coming back because we stepped up with the auto parts manufacturers. It's coming back because we've reduced the taxes on these companies that hire people so that we can have a more competitive tax system.

I'm delighted the NDP is supporting our initiative. We look forward to their vote later this week—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, I know that Ontario has a world-class education system, I know that this government has made unprecedented investments in the future of the province by focusing on strong schools, and today we learned that our kids are leading the country in math, reading and science. But, Minister, not all Ontario kids have access to the same education. There have been recent media reports which detail the poor state of education for many First Nations students, and this is not a new issue. The problems are chronic and the problems are complex.

I'm sure we all agree that every Ontario kid deserves access to the same learning experience. Minister, can you tell the House what you're doing to make sure that First Nations kids—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister of Education?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you very much, and I want to thank the member for Guelph for her advocacy in ensuring that Ontario schools are inclusive and to help us in the work that we've done to ensure all of our students succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I had a chance, a week or so ago, to go to an amazing conference called Circle of Light. At that conference we talked about the province's aboriginal education, which includes support for our First Nations junior and senior alternative school, where we've worked with the OFIFC to ensure that native friendship centres can offer some really amazing alternative education.

We've integrated First Nations content into the curriculum, with consultation far and wide across the province. We've increased targeted funding as well.

But Speaker, the issue remains that we can do our part in the province, but the federal government has responsibility for schools that are on-reserve. And so I stand very much in support of my Premier, who's asking for a first ministers' meeting when it comes to aboriginal education. Speaker, we are prepared to do our part, but—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Minister. You spoke about federal funding for reserve schools. Speaker, it has recently been reported in the media that the federal government funds aboriginal students on-reserve at least \$2,000 to \$3,000 less per student than Ontario funds students attending schools off-reserve. This is a situation that fundamentally disadvantages First Nation youth who attend reserve schools. To quote the Premier, "We have a moral obligation to ensure that every child growing up in this province has all the opportunities they need...."

Speaker, through you to the minister, what are the impediments for ensuring that aboriginal children on-reserve receive the same quality education as the rest of the kids in Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to just acknowledge off the top that there are multiple issues with which we're dealing. I hear the members across the floor talking about housing, and I want to say that there are long-term issues, which is why we have a technical team at Attawapiskat today, looking at and working with the federal technical folks to see what the short-term solutions can be. I'm happy to answer a question on that if it comes.

On the education issue, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the time has come that First Nations and aboriginal folks around the province, the federal government and the province, must work together. We must find a way to close the gap between the funding that's provided for kids on-reserve and the funding off-reserve.

There is also a capital backlog. There are children on reserves in this province who have been waiting for schools for decades. We need the federal government to be at that table, to work with us and live up to their constitutional responsibilities while we work with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### HYDRO TRANSMISSION

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Your government's speech from the throne made specific reference to the need to strengthen Ontario's economy and create jobs. Why, then, are you allowing a project that would achieve these goals to languish? Failure to complete the Leamington transmission line project is jeopardizing planned greenhouse expansion that will



bring over 1,000 permanent private sector jobs and over 2,000 temporary construction jobs to the town of Leamington. Will the Deputy Premier make a firm commitment today to ensure this project be given the green light to go forward?

1120

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, our government has made unprecedented investments in new transmission, including in the southwestern Ontario region. I'm delighted. Almost two weeks after this issue became known, I've had the opportunity to arrange meetings with the vegetable and greenhouse growers, as well as the town of Leamington. In spite of the fact that we've not heard from the opposition, I think we're going to get this resolved in a very positive way for the people of Leamington, and indeed all of southwestern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier and I apparently have a different view of handling the issue. I've already met with Mayor John Paterson and his councillors regarding this issue back on November 18, and they have serious concerns about this project moving forward.

Another meeting with the mayor and greenhouse officials is not what the people of Leamington need. What the people of Leamington need is for this project to be completed. The resulting proposed greenhouse expansions will increase sales by an estimated \$158 million annually and allow for the continued growth of this sector. This project will create private sector jobs, increase investment in Ontario and strengthen a domestic industry. So I ask the Deputy Premier: When will the Leamington transmission line project start?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member can't seem to take yes for an answer, Mr. Speaker. I would remind the member that this process started in 2006. Your party opposed spending more money on hydro transmission. You opposed it in southwestern Ontario. The environmental assessment was completed in March 2010. We're now ready to move to construction. Pat Hoy moved that along. He was an effective representative, and that's why it's there.

I say to the member: Thank you for your belated question. Thank you for your belated answer. I look forward to that line being built, because the greenhouse industry is one of the biggest and most interesting, and growing in Ontario. We'll continue to work with them on all fronts, Mr. Speaker.

## BICYCLE SAFETY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transportation. On the morning of Monday, November 7, Jenna Morrison was riding her bike to pick up her five-year-old son Lucas at his school in west Toronto. She never made it.

Ontario needs a new provincial bike strategy to make cycling more safe in this province: The McGuinty government has been developing a strategy, apparently, for

the last 18 months. My question to the minister is: Where is it?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader of the third party for the question. It's indeed a very serious issue. I know that there have been a number of very serious fatalities in Canadian and Ontario cities over the last several months, including my city of Ottawa. Certainly, the Ontario coroner has indicated that he is intending to investigate further into this particular issue and indeed, there's been a private member's bill that has been introduced by Olivia Chow, the MP from Toronto, dealing with additional specifications for trucks.

A number of the fatalities have occurred as a result of individuals being forced into or under trucks for particular fatalities. So we are taking this issue very, very seriously, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to follow the issue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, it seems to me that you're not taking something very, very seriously when over a year ago the draft plan, apparently, was available or was going to be released in months, and now over a year has gone by and we haven't seen it. Some say that strategy was completed, in fact, nine months ago, and is sitting somewhere on a desk. When will the government finally actually show some urgency, show how serious this issue is, and release its strategy and get on with the actions that we can put in place here in Ontario to make cycling more safe for cyclists?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, the member will know that if you look at the official plan of virtually every community in Ontario, it is very, very strongly advocating additional cycling, and they're building additional infrastructure for cyclists.

There are issues surrounding safety which have to be resolved, and the coroner has indicated that he is going to be looking into that. Quite frankly, as a result of the coroner's action and as a result of Olivia Chow's bill, I have indicated to my senior managers that we're doing a complete review internally.

You might also know that the province funds and does an exceptional job in terms of educating the public and providing resources to municipalities for cycling and cycling safety across the province.

We will continue our investments, we will continue our diligence and we will work closely with the coroner moving forward on this issue, take it seriously—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, as the Ontario—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. First of all, I didn't acknowledge you, and second of all, I saw somebody starting to move and I was waiting for them to finish standing, so we'll just try to be fair around the clock when we do this.

I am going to recognize the member.



## HOSPITALS

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, this question is to the health minister. Last Thursday, a historic motion passed in this House that requires the government to table a detailed plan that outlines the costs, a timeline for completion and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the hospital expansion projects promised before and during the 2011 Ontario general election. The Liberals voted against keeping their election promises. Will the Minister of Health stand up and tell Ontarians, especially residents of Cambridge and North Dumfries, whether the minister plans to table this detailed report to the Legislature by March 1, 2012?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I have to say that I was confused before, and now I'm even more confused. Let me make this very, very clear to the member from Cambridge and to the people of Cambridge: We are proceeding with a Cambridge hospital project and we are excited about it. Speaker, for the life of me, I do not understand why the member opposite is raising fear in his community about whether or not this project is a go. I'm going to be as clear as I can be: We are moving forward with the redevelopment at Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

Speaker, this man is from a party that, for years, put the brakes on hospital infrastructure. There were very, very few hospital infrastructure projects under their watch. We, on the other hand, are moving forward on projects across this province, including Cambridge.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, I understand why the minister is confused, because my motion doesn't ask whether you're going to build the hospital; it asks you to table the plans so that we can hold you accountable, something that you've failed to do. We want to know the timelines, the costs and when the projects are expected to be done. Will the minister stand up in this House today and table a detailed plan so that people know exactly what this government is going to do and when they're going to do it, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, Speaker, I'm going to give the member the benefit of the doubt because he is new to this place. The information is available. It's online. All of the information about the projects is online on the Infrastructure Ontario website.

We are the only party who has released a comprehensive health care strategy. It also requires, Speaker, that we have a competitive process. For us to release how much money we're going to spend on each of these projects will totally sour the competitive procurement approach. We do not release the cost of the projects before we have gone through that competitive procurement.

So there is significant information already online on the Infrastructure Ontario website, but we will not release the price tag, Speaker, because that would—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock, please.

As I indicated to you from the very beginning, I will make mistakes. I made one today. I lost the rotation from

the NDP. When the leader of the third party asked the last question, I went over to the Conservatives. I made a mistake. I should have gone over to this rotation, so I will now return to the Liberals.

1130

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On a point of order—I'd ask you to stop the clock, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

The member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's clear that the member did not get up in time. You had recognized the member from the Conservative Party. That's issue number one.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me make my point of order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's a very short point of order, Mr. Speaker. There are two or three points to it.

First of all, you had recognized the Conservative member for the question. That means the next question has to go by rotation. If not, you skip us and we end up losing out on the question because the rotation will go back to the Conservatives.

The decision was made to go with the Conservative member. It is our question at this point, otherwise we are the ones losing the question, and that is not the way this should work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On the same point of order?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I would agree. I appreciate the fact that you admitted the mistake. Our honourable member did get up first, so he did the right thing. But in fairness to the NDP, to the third party, I agree with the NDP House leader.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** So here's how it's going to play: The member was actually standing. I didn't acknowledge him, and he continued his question. I acknowledged the member, so I thought I'd better finish that, come back to this member, and I will go immediately to the NDP.

## SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Investing in Ontario's students is the best way to ensure that our province builds long-term prosperity for Ontario families. This is absolutely the right choice for Ontario's future.

Tradespeople are an important part of Ontario's plan for growth. Here in Ontario, we need skilled people who will build facilities for our aging boomers. It is not just enough to speak about training more skilled doctors and nurses. Tradespeople are the foundation to our society. Innovative ideas can only be implemented with trade talents and skills that we groom in the people of Ontario. We can only compete with the world to build better tools, good machines and efficient buildings if we have the right mix of talent.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: How is the minister going to make sure that we continue to encourage students in our province to join apprenticeship programs?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'd like to congratulate my friend on his election. We are very, very lucky to have someone with such a lifetime of commitment to the field of education in this House.

Mr. Speaker, since 2003, we've added 120,000 apprenticeship seats. This year, we are on track for 29,000. That is twice the rate of apprenticeship creation of previous governments, which is an extraordinary accomplishment in itself. We have given \$12 million to colleges and \$2 million to non-college training agencies for infrastructure, equipment and modernization to help them further accelerate apprenticeship creation in the province of Ontario.

We have an apprenticeship system that is responsive to current and emerging labour markets, and at our rate of growth, we are on track to meet and exceed the labour market shortfalls that have been projected, which is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, our future generations need to understand the importance of skilled tradespeople. We need to teach our children that working in the trades really means that they are in a great job. We need builders who can build Ontario's next best idea.

It is great to hear that our government is crafting opportunities for Ontario's apprenticeships while boldly confronting the challenges of this economy. The Leader of the Opposition and his caucus colleagues have repeatedly stood in the way of improving our apprenticeship programs.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: How is the minister going to make sure that the political interests of the parties opposite do not stand in the way of building a bright future for Ontario apprenticeship programs?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The party opposite has been talking about apprenticeships and trades for about six months. They maybe should be apologizing because the party opposite reduced funding for apprenticeships by an amazing 73.4%, undermining and setting our apprenticeship and trades programs back decades. They couldn't even generate 15,000 apprenticeships per year and had one of the worst records, and now put out press releases criticizing us. A little humility on the opposite side, Mr. Speaker, would help a lot.

Our partnerships with post-secondary education, business and unions, are creating an aggressive, fair-minded and balanced apprenticeship strategy—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## CREMATORIUM

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Good morning, Speaker. I'd like to congratulate you formally on your election.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, there are strict regulations in place in Europe and in other jurisdictions in Canada regarding the siting of crematoriums, yet in Ontario these guidelines do not exist. In my riding, a new crematorium is being proposed in a high-density residential area in Malton.

My question to the minister is, will you support a review by the chief medical officer of Ontario to offer guidelines on where and how far the setback should be for crematoriums located in Ontario to assist all municipalities in making these guidelines to protect the health and environmental concerns of residents across Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Government Services.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm sorry, Consumer Services.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the House. I would also like to congratulate the member opposite as well on being in this House.

Certainly, we are aware, as a government, of the need for crematoriums in the province. The diversity of our province reflects this need. New legislation will allow us to locate crematoriums off cemetery lands. This legislation will take effect on July 1, 2012.

We are certainly very much aware that the Chief Medical Officer of Health is a respected expert in our province, and we are open to any advice or study from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Again, I ask the Minister to commit to having an independent assessment conducted by the chief medical officer of Ontario to ascertain whether or not there are health concerns and environmental impacts, and if there are, whether or not the government can take leadership on this issue to ensure that the concerns—and the health concerns particularly—of the residents of Ontario are protected.

We need the government to take leadership on this issue instead of downloading the decision-making on municipalities. Will you commit to an independent review by the chief medical officer?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** The municipal approval process involves notice to the public, and the decision of the municipality may be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Establishing a crematorium requires a director's certificate of approval issued by the Ministry of the Environment. Evidence of municipal approval and approval from the Ministry of the Environment must be provided to the registrar of cemeteries before an application for a licence to operate the crematorium will be considered.

The Ontario government is committed to ensuring that laws affecting burial practices are respectful of Ontario's



cultural diversity while also preserving our environment and protecting the health of Ontarians.

Again, I would say to the member that I can assure him that we are open to any advice or study from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and we will continue to understand the needs for us to be respectful of the concerns of area residents.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This morning during question period, Minister Duncan claimed that the credit rating agencies have maintained Ontario's credit ratings throughout this downturn, which is inaccurate. Two credit ratings agencies have recently—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's not a point of order, for a correction of the record, because the member knows that only members can correct their own record. Thank you.

#### USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The same one or another one?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Another one.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Another point of order, member for—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Thank you very much.

Speaker, today in the House I heard a number of questions, particularly one to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, from two members. If I look in O'Brien and Bosc, in tabling questions—and I want to just get my glasses so I read it correctly, Mr. Speaker—they should be:

“—brief;

“—seek information; and

“—ask a question that is within the administrative responsibility of the government or of the individual minister addressed.

“Furthermore,” they should not:

“—be a statement, representation, argument, or an expression of opinion;

“—be hypothetical;

“—seek an opinion, either legal or otherwise.”

Speaker, I would put it to you that the matters that were brought up by the members of the government for their minister were well outside the bounds of the administrative capabilities not only of this minister but of this House. Federal decisions are not debatable in this House. We cannot change—we do not run the federal Parliament, and those kinds of questions should be ruled out of order as they're nothing more than posturing. If they wish to discuss federal policy, then they should be discussing it with their federal Parliament, not in this House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member for his point of order. Indeed, it is a point of order. I would also like to take this moment to remind all members that questions and answers are supposedly related to the direct business of this House.

That brings me up to my second point, other than what you've just said, and that is, we would all help ourselves if you direct the questions to the Speaker and your answers to the Speaker. That's a time-tested process to bring the temperature down. So if you remember to ask the question to the Speaker and give your answer to the Speaker, that would be very helpful.

I thank the member for his point of order, and I remind the members to keep that in mind when they do pose their questions and when they give their answers.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are just a couple of items I wanted to cover.

First of all, I apologize to our guests, because I missed somebody: on behalf of the member for Pickering–Scarborough East, Hildegard and Werner Kinder, grandparents of Pickering–Scarborough East page Madeline Braney.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Cambridge has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning the hospital expansion projects. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

If there are no further—

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just to correct the record here. On my original point of order, all I was seeking was a correction of the record on facts stated by the minister, so I believe that is a legitimate point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've already ruled on that. You can only correct your own statements in this House.

This House stands adjourned until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1144 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to introduce my guests this afternoon: my aunt and uncle, Sharon Aylsworth and John Barr; my brother, Joe Yurek; and my parents, Ed and Mary Yurek, coming down from St. Thomas.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I would like to introduce one of my constituency assistants from Kingston and the Islands, Lana Asal and her husband, Peter Knaack, who are here with us today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A most hearty welcome.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Today, I would like to acknowledge the Terry Fox Public School junior choir, who, as many of you heard earlier in our corridor, sang a moving tribute in honour of our veterans and wonderful Christmas carols.

Located in my riding, Terry Fox Public School has a strong history of building a positive learning environment for students. Believing in the three As of education—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Introduction only.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** All right. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We welcome them here to the House.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### CHICKEN INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I rise today to recognize the contribution of our chicken industry in Ontario to our provincial economy.

Ontario is the largest producer and processor of chicken in Canada, responsible for approximately one third of all Canadian chicken production. We have over 1,000 chicken farmers and 19 commercial processing facilities. The Ontario chicken industry directly employs 5,000 Ontarians and many more indirectly in the transportation, food service and retail sectors. This industry is valued at over \$630 million at the farm gate.

Today, Team Ontario—the Chicken Farmers of Ontario and the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors—are here to update us on the state of the industry. The chicken farmers and processors launched the Team Ontario concept last year, and it's working well.

I want to commend them for working together to strengthen the industry to ensure a great supply of quality chicken for Ontario. Together they have made progress in improving the allocation system and trying to ensure that the Ontario chicken industry can grow and prosper.

I want to thank the Chicken Farmers of Ontario and the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors for coming to Queen's Park. Tim Hudak and I look forward to meeting with them this afternoon to reaffirm our commitment to supply management or orderly marketing and to hear more about their plans to continue to strengthen the industry.

I hope that all members will take the time and opportunity to learn about these plans and enjoy great Ontario chicken this evening in the legislative dining room.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

### SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** MaryJane Huneault is a tenant of Canal View Homes, a non-profit housing development in Welland, which after 20 years recently lost the funding for its entire supportive housing program.

Before moving there, Mary Jane was in a cycle of homelessness with mental health issues, leading to

frequent hospital admissions and inability to pay her bills.

In 2011, Canal View Homes lost \$135,000 in funding compared to 2009. The caseworkers who supported at least 30 tenants at a cost of only \$12 per day per tenant were terminated. The Niagara region is underfunded and underserved for mental health and homelessness services.

Speaker, these are real people who need dependable, continuous social service support. Programs that are working and have proven track records of reducing hospital admissions, reducing shelter admissions and reducing police and ambulance visits should not be tendered like snow removal contracts.

As a resident of Canal View with access to caseworker support, MaryJane has not had a hospital admission in 17 years. She budgets her money. She pays her bills. She has food all month. Residents like MaryJane, though, were able to call upon their counsellors from day to day to manage their anxiety and challenges. Support like this has kept her healthy and off the streets. What happens to her now with the service cuts?

Minister of Municipal Affairs, your government must reinstate this much-needed funding to save lives and for our vulnerable citizens.

### TERRY FOX PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Today, I would like to acknowledge the Terry Fox Public School's junior choir—they're sitting up there—who, as many of you heard earlier in our corridor, sang a moving tribute in honour of our veterans and wonderful Christmas carols.

Located in my riding, the Terry Fox Public School has a strong history of building a positive learning environment for students. Believing in the three As of education, the school encourages students to excel academically, athletically and artistically. The students participate in co-curricular sports teams, house leagues and ski trips. Their enthusiastic staff encourages their students to be involved in choir, strings and band, and clubs, including Young Women on the Move and the robotics clubs.

Last year, the junior choir participated in a choral project which allowed the students to practise with the composers from the Toronto Children's Chorus.

Most importantly, the Terry Fox Public School believes its students should be involved in improving their community. Since 1986, their students have consistently raised funds for the Terry Fox Walkathon. Their school is also recognized as a certified gold ecoschool.

During his life, Terry Fox was a strong and determined individual. It is great to see the Terry Fox Public School live up to his legacy.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** As a newly elected MPP, I am obligated to say that I am neither surprised nor shocked by the political gamesmanship that plays out daily on all sides of this House. However, I am frustrated by the lack



of courage and compassion manifested by the opposite side of the House.

To me, one of the most disappointing attributes of this government is its appetite for secrecy—a government that keeps doors closed on openness, transparency and accountability; a government that denies the public any opportunity to be heard.

If it wasn't so, this government wouldn't be making a unilateral decision, without any proof, justification or dialogue, to shut down the jails in Owen Sound, Walkerton and Sarnia, and ultimately take 200 jobs and a combined payroll of \$6 million out of Bruce and Grey.

Since day one, I've been calling on the responsible minister to do the right thing: to reverse her decision, pending a full public review, and to consult with the local stakeholders who would be adversely impacted by the closures. A decision of this magnitude that will affect 200 families must involve public input and must not be made as part of a quiet process among insiders.

The bottom line is, if this government doesn't clean up its act and move to strengthen the tenets of democracy, like transparency and openness, their members will be sitting on this side of House by the end of the next provincial election.

Mr. Speaker, I again challenge this government and its minister to show integrity. Call off the jail closures now.

#### OCULARISTS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélina:** Darren Hall, and his uncle before him, are ocularists. They have been coming to Sudbury for 33 years. Ocularists are the health specialists who make prosthetic eyes.

Many people in northeastern Ontario have lost an eye and need their services. That includes my 91-year-old father-in-law, who lost his eye in a mining accident years ago. That includes Maria Bordignon, one of the constituents in my riding, and hundreds more that need prosthetic eyes.

The government says that it's looking for ways to save money. Well, here's one: Pay your bills on time. The Assistive Devices program is so brutally slow, even with the new system, in making payments that Mr. Hall, the only ocularist practising in northeastern Ontario, has shut his doors on Sudbury clinics. Mr. Hall is fed up with waiting months and months for payments that are owed to him by the ADP. Now hundreds of people from northeastern Ontario must travel to Toronto, costing the Northern Health Travel Grant tens of thousands of dollars in travel and hotel costs.

The government says that it wants to balance its budget. Pay your bills on time. What we have now, Mr. Speaker, is a lose-lose-lose: a loss of services to northerners, a frustrated ocularist and hefty Northern Health Travel Grant bills.

1310

This is not new. The NDP has raised the issue of late payment by ADP a number of times. Now, Mr. McGuinty, will you listen to a good idea that saves money and improves services?

#### MARLIES KLEKNER-ALT

**M. Phil McNeely:** C'est un honneur pour moi de souligner l'excellence et le talent d'une athlète de ma circonscription d'Ottawa-Orléans. Marlies Klekner-Alt, âgée de 17 ans et élève de 12<sup>e</sup> année à l'École secondaire publique Louis-Riel d'Orléans, a reçu le prix prestigieux Helena Harbridge 2011, décerné par l'Association canadienne de golf junior.

Depuis 2006, le prix reconnaît l'esprit sportif, le dévouement et la contribution au golf d'une joueuse membre de l'Association canadienne de golf junior. Cette récompense est d'ailleurs nommée à la mémoire et aussi à l'image de la joueuse Helena Harbridge, décédée en 2006 lors de sa première année à l'université West Georgia.

Comme le mentionnait d'ailleurs la récipiendaire aux médias, « Ce prix est important pour moi car il fait la démonstration que le travail acharné et l'effort portent fruit ».

Marlies Klekner-Alt rejoindra sa soeur aînée sur l'équipe de golf de l'université Newman dès l'automne 2012. Elle est affiliée au Club de Golf Camelot et a été entraînée par Danielle Nadon, qui a d'ailleurs une école de golf à Orléans.

Alors, félicitations à cette grande athlète d'Orléans et tous mes vœux de succès pour une carrière florissante.

J'encourage donc tous les jeunes sportives et sportifs à persévérer et à poursuivre leur rêve.

#### DOROTHY KEW

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** As MPPs, we are justifiably proud of the places we come from; the places we call home. We treasure the history of those places and the ways that our personal stories and those of our families and friends become part of a wonderful tapestry. Without that history and sense of place, we lose an important part of ourselves.

On that note, I rise today to salute the outstanding community work of one of my constituents, Dorothy Kew. Dorothy has just been named a recipient of a 2011 Ontario Senior Achievement Award for her three decades of service to the Mississauga library system, where she has been a passionate promoter of local heritage for over 20 years. She was also a powerful influence on the development and promotion of the groundbreaking Mississauga Historic Images Gallery.

Her dedication to community and family history is truly inspiring, and her story is a reminder of the many ways that Burlington shares its riches with the neighbourhood. Congratulations, Dorothy.

#### CHICKEN INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to thank representatives for the Chicken Farmers of Ontario and chicken processors here today, working together as Team Ontario to come to Queen's Park to host their annual chicken day.

Our chicken farmers and processors play very important roles in Ontario's agriculture and food processing sectors. With more than 10,000 full-time jobs between the production, processing and direct input segments, the value chain is an economic generator measured in the billions of dollars.

I'm proud Ontario is the home to some of the world's most delicious, safest and most nutritious chicken, and proud to support Ontario's chicken farmers and processors. Nearly 40% of all chicken farms in Canada are located in Ontario, making Ontario the largest producer, processor and consumer of chicken in the country.

We also know that supply management plays an important role in the industry's success. It brings stability to the industry, which is why our government is a strong, committed supporter of this system. I commend Team Ontario for their hard work. The leadership and support that these organizations provide is helping contribute to the future success of our agri-food industry and Ontario's economy.

Our government is proud to support and celebrate the wonderful achievements of the chicken farmers and processors of Ontario and look forward to their continued success. We call on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to defend supply management in any future trade negotiations.

#### EVERLYN MASSON

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, today I rise to recognize one of the great contributors to my riding of Nipissing and congratulate her on being named a recipient of the Ontario Senior Achievement Award.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Yeah, you can clap.

Evelyn Masson—Evie, as she's known to her family, friends and neighbours—has spent her lifetime volunteering in various capacities, even while working full-time and raising her three children.

Evie has always devoted her time to the betterment of individuals and her community as a whole, and remains committed to doing so today.

She is currently a member of the municipality of Callander's 125th anniversary committee and is actively involved in local council meetings. She continues to help raise funds for the Christmas cheer fund and the newly established Callander and District Food Bank.

Over the years, she has also given her valuable time to many other community organizations such as the M.T. Davidson School, the Callander museum board, and the Knox United Church board.

Evie has previously been recognized by the Ontario Heritage Foundation for her volunteer work and is a recipient of the Ontario horticultural society's president's award.

I look forward to honouring her when she receives her Ontario Senior Achievement Award in the music room of the office of the Lieutenant Governor on December 14.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the members.

#### TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that during the recess between the 39th and the 40th Parliaments, the following documents and papers respecting the Legislative Assembly were tabled:

—on June 14, 2011, the annual energy conservation progress report, 2010, volume 1, Managing a Complex Energy System, from the Environmental Commissioner;

—on June 21, 2011, the annual report 2010-11 from the Ombudsman;

—on June 23, 2011, the annual report 2010-11 from the Integrity Commissioner;

—on June 28, 2011, the review of the 2011 pre-election report on Ontario finances from the Auditor General;

—on July 6, 2011, the report concerning Randy Hillier, member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, from the Integrity Commissioner;

—on August 29, 2011, the 2009-10 annual report from the Chief Electoral Officer.

I further beg to inform the House that the Clerk has laid upon the table the roll of members elected at the general election of 2011.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I also beg to inform the House that, in accordance with standing order 117(c), the House leaders have selected in rounds the recognized parties from which the committee chairs shall be drawn.

Chairs shall be drawn from the caucus of the government for the following committees: the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; the Standing Committee on Government Agencies; the Standing Committee on General Government; and the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

Chairs shall be drawn from the caucus of the official opposition for the following committees: the Standing Committee on Public Accounts; the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly; the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

Chairs shall be drawn from the caucus of the third party for the following committees: the Standing Committee on Estimates; the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Standing order 63(a) provides that "the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pur-



suant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year.”

The House not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain ministries and offices on Thursday, November 17, 2011, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 63(b), the estimates before the committee of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Ministry of the Attorney General; Cabinet Office; Ministry of Children and Youth Services; Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; Ministry of Community and Social Services; Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services; Ministry of Consumer Services; Ministry of Economic Development and Trade; Ministry of Energy; Ministry of Education; Ministry of the Environment; Ministry of Finance; Office of Francophone Affairs; Ministry of Government Services; Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport; Ministry of Infrastructure; Ministry of Labour; Office of the Lieutenant Governor; Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Ministry of Natural Resources; Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry; Office of the Premier; Ministry of Research and Innovation; Ministry of Revenue; Ministry of Tourism and Culture; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; Ministry of Transportation; Office of the Assembly; Office of the Auditor General; Office of the Chief Electoral Officer; and Ombudsman of Ontario are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

1320

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the estimates 2011-12 of these ministries and offices, not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be received and concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DES VOIES PUBLIQUES ET DES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN

Mr. Norm Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act / Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** The bill would designate provincial highways that, when they're being rebuilt, it would require that a minimum of one metre of the shoulder of the highway be paved, with benefits of increased safety, improved health for Ontarians and lower maintenance costs for the highway.

## LOCAL MUNICIPALITY DEMOCRACY ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA DÉMOCRATIE AU SEIN DES MUNICIPALITÉS LOCALES

Mr. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to amend the Green Energy Act, 2009 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 10, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** The Green Energy Act, 2009, as it currently stands, overrides traditional municipal roles in regards to planning, restrictions and bylaws as they would usually pertain to green energy projects. It does that through schedule K of the act, which amends the Planning Act.

The Planning Act is a tool that our municipalities utilize every day in their ability to draft plans, impose restrictions, enforce bylaws and exercise the same basic controls that municipalities would be free to exercise over other major industrial projects.

The Local Municipality Democracy Act, 2011, is a way for the province to right a wrong by changing the amendments made to the Planning Act by the Green Energy Act. By changing the Green Energy Act to give municipalities specific rights to enforce bylaws to protect the health and safety concerns presented by their citizens regarding these projects, we're treating our municipal government as partners in our democracy.

More than 80 municipalities have already passed resolutions asking this Legislature for the restoration of local control for these projects. It's time for us to do as parliamentarians should and represent the expressed views of our constituents.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** One reminder: We do try to describe the bill—what the content is—and you usually take that from the preamble. If the preamble is long, we would ask you to keep it as short as possible, please, with no comment, just the content of the bill.

## MOTIONS

### APPOINTMENT OF HOUSE OFFICERS

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding presiding officers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Minister.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bas Balkissoon, member for the electoral district of Scarborough–Rouge River, be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; that Ted Arnott, member for the electoral district of Wellington–Halton Hills, be appointed First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; that Julia Munro, member for the electoral district of York–Simcoe, be appointed Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; and that Paul Miller, member for the electoral district of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, be appointed Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF) was established by the Ontario government as a four-year, \$80-million program to assist businesses in the creation of jobs and investment in new technologies, equipment or skills training;

“Whereas EODF has proven to be a valuable asset to assist eastern Ontario communities hard hit by the economic downturn in their efforts to attract and retain business and industry;

“Whereas during the recent provincial election, Premier Dalton McGuinty expressed a commitment to extend the four-year program beyond its March 2012 expiry date;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation to recognize that the challenges facing businesses and industries in eastern Ontario when the program was created persist, and it is therefore critical for the EODF program to be extended beyond March 2012; and

“Further, that the minister convenes a meeting of eastern Ontario MPPs to seek their input into how the program can be adjusted to better meet its job creation objectives and to ensure it includes the appropriate

accountability measures to protect the investment by taxpayers.”

I'll affix my signature to the petition, Mr. Speaker, and send it to the table with Prakriti. Thank you.

### CREMATORIA

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I'd like to introduce the concerned citizens of Malton who are present here today in the public gallery.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** They've taken their time out from their busy schedule to hear this petition. I have in my hand over 1,600 signatures that have been signed from residents in Ontario, primarily from Malton, but across Ontario. I'll read the petition now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas strict regulations on emissions of crematoria exist in Europe, and health experts have stated that crematoria should not be located in residential areas due to concerns about emissions of mercury, dioxins and other particulate matter;

“Whereas regulations under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002, are silent on restrictions and leave municipalities without assistance in determining the health impacts of crematoriums in residential communities;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health should immediately conduct a review of crematoriums, studying the health impacts, and make recommendations on minimum setbacks to ensure there are no health risks for neighbouring residential properties. Appropriate guidelines following this review should be included in the regulations coming into effect July 2012. A hold should be placed on the siting of new crematoriums in Ontario in order to protect residents from toxic exposure until the review is conducted and appropriate guidelines are set.”

I agree completely with this petition and I will affix my signature to it.

### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas municipalities have always had control over planning matters in their communities; and

1330

“Whereas community consultation and engagement is essential for successful green energy projects; and

“Whereas local residents should be actively involved in all discussions about wind turbine projects in their community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Liberal government return planning power for renewable energy projects to municipalities and local residents....”



I support this petition and am pleased to affix my name to it.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I have this petition from the good people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients;... and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are being performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care" services "in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine";

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario "to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask the nice page Prakriti to bring it to the Clerk. We'll practise the name for the next time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I know exactly what you're saying, member.

Further petitions?

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Speaker, I'd like to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of Walkerton and surrounding areas do not support the closure of the Walkerton Jail; and

"Whereas the local stakeholders in Walkerton have not been consulted regarding this closure; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government has failed to release the cost-benefit analysis used to determine that the Walkerton Jail be ordered for closure; and

"Whereas the Auditor General stated in 2008 that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services would be short 2,000 beds by 2011;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government postpone the closure of the Walkerton Jail until the promised local stakeholder consultation has occurred and the cost-benefit analysis has been released."

I support this petition and I affix my signature to it.

### OMBUDSMAN OF ONTARIO

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of

hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Mobarrat to bring it to the Clerk.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** This petition ties in very well with the private member's bill that my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings just introduced into the House.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas" the McGuinty "Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build industrial wind and solar power generation facilities without any local say or local approval; and

"Whereas the" Liberal "government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, who are accountable to no one; and

"Whereas the" Liberal "government has removed any kind of appeal process for municipalities or for people living in close proximity to these projects; and

"Whereas" the leader of Her Majesty's official opposition, the member for Simcoe-Grey "and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party have committed to restoring local decision-making powers and to building renewable energy projects only in places where they are welcomed, wanted and at prices Ontario families can afford;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty" Liberal "government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new industrial wind and solar developments on municipalities that have not approved them and whose citizens do not want them in their community."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it. Thank you.

### WIND TURBINES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further petitions? The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Huron.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Brock.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** That's okay; it was close.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I affix my signature to that, Mr. Speaker, as I agree, and I'll give this to page Yousef.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Speaker, I have one last petition today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the 200-foot-high CAW industrial wind turbine being built in the middle of Port Elgin residences and cottages does not comply with the provincial law requiring 550-metre setbacks (to preserve people's health and safety); and

"Whereas it was rejected by the democratically elected municipality and local residents, who were not adequately informed about the project;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately halt construction of the turbine and require it to be moved to a site that does not violate provincial legislation as passed under the Green Energy Act in 2009. We also petition that area residents be adequately informed about the siting and not surprised by sudden construction of a wind turbine."

I support this petition and affix my signature to it, and I'll ask Christian to deliver it to the table.

#### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "Petition to Save Duntroon Central Public School and All Other Rural Schools in Clearview Township.

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and" his "Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the petition.

#### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built 200 feet below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source of over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA's potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry."

It is signed by literally hundreds of people in my community.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind



development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

1340

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils representing two million Ontarians called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place and local democracy is restored;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I sign this petition, support it and I’ll pass it on with Daniel.

#### HYDRO DAM

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition with regard to Bala Falls, and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government permitted the release of crown lands to enable the development of a hydro dam in the heart of Bala without discussion or proper consultation with the municipality of the township of Muskoka Lakes, the district of Muskoka or the residents and businesses who would be directly affected; and

“Whereas the community is a tourism destination which is dependent upon Bala Falls as an attraction; and

“Whereas residents and business people alike are deeply concerned about the economic and environmental impact that the construction and operation of the dam will have on the community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty government and in particular the Minister of Natural Resources reverse the decision to release crown lands for a hydro dam in Bala Falls.”

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member. The time has now ended for petitions.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for London–Fanshawe, I believe, on a point of order.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, I want to correct my record from this morning’s question period. In my question to the Deputy Premier, I said, “Some 25 now out of work and an unemployment rate over 9%.” I meant to say, “Some 25,000 now out of work.” Thank you, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That is a point of order for correcting the record. Thank you.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

##### DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 24, 2011, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Today I will be splitting my time with the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

It is an honour to be standing here today to deliver my maiden speech in this Legislative Assembly. Historically, the maiden speech has provided new members with an opportunity to introduce themselves to their colleagues. Today I would like to tell you about myself, my values, my riding and how they connect with the speech from the throne.

First, I would like to recognize my predecessor, the Honourable Gerry Phillips, who represented the constituency of Scarborough–Agincourt for 24 years. During his tenure he served as the Minister of Citizenship, Minister of Energy and Minister of Government Services. He is respected in my riding, so much so that in the 2003 provincial election, Gerry won his seat by a margin of 61%.

As I begin to represent the constituents of Scarborough–Agincourt, I want to thank Gerry for serving his community and the constituents well. I hope, as a new member for the riding, I can live up to the standard he has set forth.

I also would like to congratulate the member for Brant on his recent election as the Speaker of the House. I know the Speaker will use his past experience as an educator in this House to ensure that we conduct our business in a respectful manner. Every day we are visited by schools, youth groups and choirs. Young people look to us to lead by example. I hope all members here will continue to commit to uphold this obligation.

I want to acknowledge my riding association and executive members who are here today. They’re a dedicated group of individuals who continue to work hard for our community. I also want to thank the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt, who have trusted me to represent them and have expressed their confidence in the Liberal Party’s vision for Ontario.

I also want to thank all the young people who have worked on my campaign, young people like Tharani, Victor, Jenny, George and Akehil. These young people and many others were the lifeblood of my election campaign, and they will be the lifeblood of our province. Together, we got to know the people of Scarborough–Agincourt, their struggles, their challenges, their joys and

their pride. Because of their help and inspiration, when I speak in this House, I speak for all those residents of Scarborough–Agincourt, and it is an honour to do so.

With this in mind, I must pass on a story that I heard many times while knocking on doors and talking with seniors. The seniors in my riding want to live an independent life in their homes for as long as they can. I'm very pleased that our government has taken a leadership role in ensuring our seniors can stay at home through the home renovation tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, I'm an immigrant, a registered nurse and an educator. To my knowledge, I'm the first female Chinese-Canadian MPP in this House. It is because of what I have learned from these experiences that I ran in October's election and why I'm inspired to work for the people in my riding.

I was born in Hong Kong and came to Canada when I was eight years old. My parents faced many challenges, such as learning a new language and adapting to a new way of life. Myself, I had to adapt to a new school system and learn how to make new friends. Yet despite the many challenges our family faced in the early years, we always knew Canada and Ontario would always be the place of our new home.

My parents valued the importance of knowledge, duty, hard work and the need to help others. Hence, my sister, my brother and I have all pursued careers in health care. I'm here today because my parents have pushed me to learn. But I'm also here today because our public school education system provided me with opportunities to learn and to grow. In my high school years, I was the first female student council president and yearbook editor. I also had great high school teachers who encouraged and challenged me with many ideas and thought processes.

During my undergraduate days as a nursing student, I saw the challenges of many vulnerable patients and their families. I learned very early in nursing school of the need to advocate for children, youth, seniors, women and new Canadians. What I learned is that education is a key social determinant of health, for success and, most importantly, for opportunity, and it is an essential element of improving the lives of our new Canadians.

It is with this in mind that I tell you that Scarborough–Agincourt is home of some of the best public schools in Ontario, schools that support many students from Canadian families who are new to this country. Recently the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care joined me in a visit to David Lewis Public School in my riding. Many of the students that attend David Lewis come from parents who are new Canadians. Many of the families face financial challenges, and many of them are learning English as a second language. Yet with the leadership and guidance of the school principal, Karen Peach, who is with us today, David Lewis has been recognized consistently for its students' success. Recently, the school received the Dr. Bette M. Stephenson Recognition of Achievement award for its work in improving students' learning experience.

There are many other great schools just like David Lewis; for example, Agincourt Collegiate Institute, which will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2015. There is Kennedy Public School, which for the past seven years has been recognized and distinguished by the Fraser Institute for excelling in academic performance.

As you can tell, the schools in my riding are working hard to create new opportunities for our young people. It is therefore important that we support them in this endeavour.

For the past eight years this government has understood the need to build strong education systems. As a former school trustee, I have seen the positive results of the investments that have been made in our schools. For example, we know that when kids eat healthy, they have a better learning experience and will therefore have a better chance to succeed. That's why I was very proud to see this government pass the Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act.

The throne speech notes that this government will continue to invest in our education system. By 2014, 250,000 Ontario four- and five-year-olds will enrol in full-day kindergarten. Our government is creating 60,000 new spaces in our colleges and universities so an Ontario student who wants to go to college or university can do so. We will keep our post-secondary tuition affordable by reducing the tuition costs by 30% for families making less than \$160,000 a year. With these investments in education, we will ensure students will be a part of the strongest and most educated workforce and will strengthen our economy.

#### 1350

My riding is not just known for its great schools. In fact, like all the ridings in our great province, my riding has great stories. What began as a farming community later developed as railways were constructed. Now, because of builders like Jean Kennedy Campbell, a matriarch of Scarborough–Agincourt who is here with us today, the riding has developed into a supportive and vibrant community.

My riding is home to many green spaces, such as Agincourt Community Centre, Stephen Leacock Community Centre, L'Amoreaux Community Recreation Centre and the Tam O'Shanter Golf Course. It is home to green eco-schools like the Dr. Norman Bethune Collegiate Institute, which was one of the first high schools in Toronto to receive a platinum eco-school certification.

The riding has also great libraries, like Bridlewood library, Agincourt library and Steeles library. Together with local youth, the residents of my riding have created one of the most successful community-based reading programs. On Saturdays, you will find me participating in our reading programs in one of our great libraries.

It is also a riding that looks after itself. For many years, the Agincourt Community Services Association has assisted those most in need by providing the food bank, job fairs and outreach.

Yet, the most important aspect of my riding is its diversity. My riding has young people, seniors, Chinese,



South Asians, Koreans, Japanese, Tamils, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists. Scarborough–Agincourt is also the first home of many new Canadians. That’s what is great about Scarborough–Agincourt. At a time when countries like the United Kingdom and Germany have called multiculturalism a failure, my riding, like so many others in Canada, has shown that we can move forward together to build a strong community that respects and embraces diversity.

I think that’s an important lesson for us as members of the Legislative Assembly. We have enormous challenges ahead of us: an uncertain global economy and climate change, to name a few. These challenges can only be met if we in this House move forward together and provide strong examples for our citizens to do the same.

Together, Scarborough–Agincourt has built a strong community, and I know we can do the same to build a stronger Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude with a famous Buddhist quote, one which inspires me as the member for Scarborough–Agincourt: “Pay no attention to the faults of others, things done or left undone by others. Consider only what by oneself is done or left undone.” Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. I’d like to congratulate the Speaker on his recent election. I wish him well and yourself well in the future and in your role. It’s an honour for me to be here today to deliver this inaugural address.

I’d like to thank the good people of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for placing their confidence in me to serve and represent their interests here in this historic Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

J’aimerais remercier tous les concitoyens de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell pour m’avoir démontré leur confiance en m’élisant comme leur député pour représenter leurs intérêts ici à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario.

I’d also like to thank all of my campaign team, who worked so hard on such short notice to ensure that Glengarry–Prescott–Russell remained red.

Je suis fier d’avoir été accordé le privilège de succéder au député sortant, M. Jean-Marc Lalonde, qui, pendant 16 ans, a été la voix de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell à Toronto.

I’m truly humbled at being given the privilege to succeed former MPP Jean-Marc Lalonde, who served our riding for 16 years. Mr. Lalonde worked tirelessly and selflessly to ensure that the needs of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and eastern Ontario were taken into consideration during the decision-making process here at Queen’s Park.

Les résidents de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell et moi-même remercions M. Lalonde pour toutes ses années de travail acharné au sein du secteur public, et nous lui souhaitons bonheur et succès dans ses projets futurs.

I thank Mr. Lalonde, as do the residents of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, for his many years of dedicated public service, and we wish him well in his future endeavours.

Speaker, I’ve been fortunate to have been elected to public office on four different occasions, first as mayor of Alexandria, then North Glengarry.

Je suis très chanceux d’avoir été élu à quatre reprises et d’avoir servi en tant que maire pendant 11 ans. Je peux vous assurer que ce fut une expérience enrichissante. Être au service de ses concitoyens est un honneur et un privilège. L’électorat nous procure l’opportunité de représenter ses intérêts avec dévouement et intégrité.

Serving my constituents for 11 years as a local mayor has provided me with a wide range of experience in lower-tier and upper-tier municipal government. This experience has provided me with valuable insight regarding the importance of provincial and municipal government partnerships.

Our nine mayors—and I say “nine”—mayors and councillors in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell work hard to improve the quality of life in Ontario and in our region, and together, they are our front-line voices. Ensuring that the needs of our municipal partners are respected and understood is a priority for me.

This Liberal government’s commitment to upload provincial responsibilities that were recklessly downloaded by the previous Conservative government will help give our municipal partners the funds they need to invest in much-needed infrastructure projects in their communities. This commitment will allow them to maintain reasonable property tax rates, helping them to remain competitive in retaining and attracting new investments, including residential and commercial development.

Nous avons en main un plan qui procurera aux municipalités les outils nécessaires pour les aider à maintenir un taux raisonnable par rapport aux taxes foncières.

Speaker, I also look forward to working with all our community groups and organizations in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, including our hard-working volunteers who dedicate so much of their time and knowledge to improving our quality of life and who make our communities so vibrant and strong.

Monsieur le Président, l’idée de travailler avec tous les groupes et les organisations de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, spécialement avec tous nos bénévoles, me motive énormément. Ces gens dévouent beaucoup de leur temps et de leurs connaissances afin d’améliorer la qualité de vie de tous et chacun. C’est ce qui rend nos communautés si fortes et vibrantes.

Speaker, Ontario is a great place to live, do business and raise a family. I was born in Sherbrooke, Quebec, and moved to Alexandria in this great province of Ontario with my family in 1973. My parents, Wayne and Sylvia, although retired, are active in the local community and can be seen volunteering for the local hospital, supporting the local church, where my dad drives for the Canadian Cancer Society voluntarily.



I want to take this opportunity to thank them both for the unconditional love and support they have so generously given to me, my brother, Michael, and my sister, Shelley, throughout our lives. It is a combination of their morals and values that I bring to this assembly. I know that my parents are looking forward to benefiting from the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit so they can stay in their home as long as possible.

I'm also the proud father to a daughter, Chloe, who is 24, and my son, Calvin, who is 19. I'm also the proud stepfather to Leah, who is a wonderful seven-year-old girl.

My grandson Alexi will be four years old next month and he will benefit from an early start to his education when he attends this Liberal government's initiative of full-day kindergarten next September.

I will also be enjoying the arrival of my granddaughter in March of next year, a second child to my daughter Chloe and her spouse, Pierre Paul.

Speaker, public service is rewarding but it also can be demanding. Without the support of our families, we'd be hard-pressed to accomplish the goals that we set out, to serve the people in our ridings and in all of Ontario.

That's why I take this opportunity to thank my spouse, Kelly, for her continued support, her love, her patience, her understanding and her hard work in ensuring that things go well at home while I'm away on government business or representing our constituents throughout our vast riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. She truly is the glue that holds us together and allows me to do the work that I am so passionate about and that I hold dear to my heart.

Like many ridings across Ontario, Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is unique. We are a mix of rural and urban, and close to 70% of our population is francophone.

1400

Presque 70 % de notre population est francophone.

Our landscape is blessed with beautiful, quality farmland, including la forêt Larose and the Alfred Bog. My recent appointment by the Premier as parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for francophone affairs, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, and to the Honourable Ted McMeekin, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, is an honour, and I look forward to these challenges with great enthusiasm.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate all members elected to this assembly. I look forward to working with you all and my colleagues in government to ensure that all Ontario remains the best place to live and work in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'd like to thank the member for his—I hope you've left some for your maiden speech.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Pardon me?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I hope you've left some information for your maiden speech. That's one hour. Thank you.

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk, questions and comments.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Speaker. I would like to comment and certainly, on behalf of the opposition, to congratulate both the member for Scarborough–Agin-court and the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. As we know, a maiden speech is a great opportunity to talk about your riding, to talk about your family, as the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell just did and, in the case of the member for Scarborough–Agin-court, to talk about the diversity of that particular part of Ontario.

So here we are. We're just into the second week. We have two newly elected members that have joined returning members and been exposed to not only a throne speech but also what's been referred to as a fall economic statement. I don't know whether there is disappointment among these two members. If they were looking for any indication at all of fiscal restraint, I think they would be very, very disappointed. Now, granted, they have very recently joined this government, a government that in just eight years has developed a reputation for wildly out-of-control spending, a government that has single-handedly doubled Ontario's budget. And when we look at the coming several years, I don't see any indication of that being turned around.

Maybe these two members could do something about that. They've entered a new political landscape here at Queen's Park. Maybe they can put their foot down, have some comment on the binge spending that we've seen and the debt doubling. I just look forward to their contributions on that front. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome the two members, the member from Scarborough–Agin-court and the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, who made their first speeches today. It was very interesting to hear about your riding, to hear about how you got here, and I'm happy to see that you had some support that came and witnessed this great event. Certainly, welcome to Queen's Park. I know your riding a little bit better now, having listened to what you had to say, and I thank you for this.

Pour le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell : vous avez des grands souliers à remplir, monsieur. Jean-Marc Lalonde était un des géants autour d'ici, surtout du côté de la francophonie. C'est un bon ami, puis vous vous assurerez de lui dire bonjour la prochaine fois que vous allez le voir.

J'étais contente de savoir que vous êtes grand-père et que vous allez avoir une petite-fille bientôt. Je dois vous dire que, lorsque ma première petite-fille est née, je ne pouvais passer devant un magasin qui avait du rose sans acheter. Ça s'est calmé un petit peu, mais vous allez avoir beaucoup de plaisir avec tout ce qui s'en vient.

You're certainly welcome to join us. Jean-Marc was here with you a couple of weeks ago and I had the pleasure of meeting you. You will have a good mentor; I think Jean-Marc is staying connected to this place. He



certainly was a good friend and somebody that I much respected and continue to respect.

It's great to see you and to welcome you to Queen's Park. You both did very well in your first speech, and you both allowed us to get to know you a little bit better. There will be many opportunities to continue this dialogue, but it was a pleasure to learn a little bit more about you and about your ridings. Again, bienvenue à Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions? The member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker, and I wish you all the very best in your new role. I know you will work very effectively in the chair.

I was pleased to hear the comments from my two new colleagues, the members from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and Scarborough–Agincourt. Of course, their predecessors are two outstanding individuals who made terrific contributions to the Ontario Legislature and indeed to their ridings: Jean-Marc Lalonde and Gerry Phillips.

I know all of us in this House want to express our deepest sympathy to Jean-Marc Lalonde and his family with the passing of his wife this past summer. I know how important Mrs. Lalonde was in terms of Jean-Marc's public life in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. She spent a lot of time at hockey arenas over many, many years and was always there for anything that Jean-Marc Lalonde wanted to do.

I do know that these two new members from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and Scarborough–Agincourt will follow in the footsteps of their predecessors. They will ably represent these two wonderful ridings, one in urban Ontario and one in rural Ontario.

I do know that both of these members mentioned today that in the throne speech we outlined our tax credit for renovations for seniors. I know there's a significant number of seniors in the riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and certainly Scarborough–Agincourt. Gerry Phillips was a strong advocate on behalf of seniors in the province of Ontario, to make sure we do everything we can to help our seniors who helped define the province that we have in Ontario today. We do know that these members will be strong advocates for the progressive policies that have been put forward by this government over the last eight-plus years.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Renfrew. Order.

Further questions? The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to thank the two new members from Scarborough–Agincourt and Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

As has been said before, I knew both of their predecessors very well. In fact, Gerry Phillips was a person I had a lot of respect for, a very competent, capable, respectable individual who had served on committees—I just realized now he is here. Welcome, Gerry; it's great. I

say that with all the greatest respect. I think you have big shoes to fill, so to say.

But I should say that the PC candidate, Liang Chen, I think was a very well-qualified candidate as well. She's very highly respected, highly educated, a Ph.D., I think, in economics or finance, and would have been a wonderful member as well. But I'm sure your experience as a school trustee will serve the public well.

Also, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell: I'm very impressed with your credentials municipally as well, and your remarks were very inclusive and kind. Jean-Marc was another wonderful guy, a personal friend of mine; I travelled with him a bit as well, as I also played on his hockey team. He was very well-liked here on all sides. I can say that with great confidence.

Again, our candidate in that riding was a formidable candidate as well, being that her first language was French. I had met her. In fact, I was supportive of her candidacy, and I would say that Marilissa Gosselin was a person that would have served equally well here.

But congratulations to both of you on your fine remarks, known as your maiden speech. One last remark: Generally, they used to be about an hour long. You could almost introduce your entire heritage from the beginning of time. But now it's 10 minutes, and I think it's important to get that speech out of the way so we can get down to business about being accountable to our constituents. Thank you very much.

1410

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further comments?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I want to acknowledge the comments and feedback from the members from Haldimand–Norfolk, Nickel Belt, Peterborough and Durham.

I also want to say to my colleague the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell that it's so touching to hear your story—heartfelt, touching—because all of us have lives. For you to be so transparent to share with us—thank you for doing that.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, my maiden speech is not just about my riding but what this government is going to do. We made a commitment to the people of Ontario and we're going to act on these commitments. I heard very loud and clear—this province will grow and grow. By 2020, over 40% of this province is aging. So this government is not waiting until 2020 to address this issue; we're doing it now. That's called progressive and proactive decision-making, okay? It's also evidence-based and it's best practices. At the end of the day, your constituents are similar to mine, and they're growing old. They are making sure each one of us is accountable and responsible to act on their needs.

I know as a registered nurse how concerned they are about living at home independently. This home renovation tax credit not only ensures that every senior in this province can stay at home, but it also creates jobs in our community. You can argue that it doesn't work, but at the end of the day, it does work and it's evidence-based. We all know that our population is growing old, and I



want to make sure that we are championing what our communities say. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, I intend to split my time with the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Hub Fedeli, my father, would have been thrilled to see this day; so would my grandparents, Anne and Vittorio Fedeli and Teresa and Antonio Fava. Sadly, they've all gone before us. My wife, Patty; my mother, Lena; my sister, Teresa, along with her husband, Jack Rosenfield, and their daughters, Anna and Simona; my brother, Peter, along with his wife, Elizabeth, and their beautiful little daughter, Maggie; and my Aunt Emelia and her husband, Dan Pucher, are all watching today, likely thinking of our Italian immigrant grandparents and what this may have meant to them. They were all so helpful in getting me elected, and they were joined daily by my in-laws, Chuck and Erma Kelly. In fact, there were a lot of people who helped me get here, and I would like to take a few minutes to acknowledge and thank some of them.

It all started with the launch of my candidacy for the nomination at the Italian-run Davedi Club. President Vince Orlando was a huge help that day and every single day throughout the campaign. Barb Minogue emceed the event, which was attended by over 500 people. My old and dear friend Colin Vezina and Councillor Judy Koziol spoke on my behalf. We sold 479 memberships that first hour and came out with a splash.

Next month was the nomination meeting, which had our leader, Tim Hudak, in attendance, so you can imagine it was another wall-to-wall packed house. East Ferris Mayor Bill Vrebosch nominated me, and Mattawa's Vala Monestime-Belter and North Bay Councillor Daryl Vaillancourt spoke on my behalf, followed by a roaring speech by Tim Hudak.

My campaign manager was Bill Ferguson of TWG Communications in North Bay, which is an award-winning marketing firm. Bill made it look so easy, and on election night, he just nodded approvingly as we chalked up another landslide win. He had the assistance of a very capable team behind him, and our daily contact was Donna Backer. She met every challenge with her most beautiful smile. His wife, Roxanne, and young son Hunter played a large role and kept the data flowing each and every day for us.

Shirley Fahlgren managed the office, and Erma Stevens opened the headquarters every morning and staffed the phones. I wish you could meet Erma; she was a hoot.

Kathy Wilcox coordinated all of our volunteers, which meant she was active morning to night every single day. Long-time friends and supporters Bud Maynard, Gwen Millard, Sylvia Cotgreave, Emily Stillar, Shelly Owens-Houston and Shirley Priolo were all there to make calls, enter data and do whatever needed to be done.

They were joined by many of my relatives, including Al and Teresa Fava—my aunt and uncle—and Helen and

Vince Zappala, and too many other volunteers to name individually.

Gord and Lisa Rennie handled our daily canvass. This was a monumental task that took great skill and planning and also helped me lose 10 pounds along the way.

**Interjection:** You need that.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Yes.

Jane Mortson canvassed for me every single day, rain or shine, without ever uttering one complaint. This is one senior citizen who continues to teach us years after her classroom duties have ended.

Ray Meadows put up every single large sign and then took them all down 30 days later. Thankfully, he had Dave Paterson at his side and an army of drivers to put up the 2,500 lawn signs. Mike Oakes also helped with signs and was our go-to guy for every imaginable task.

There were three Nipissing University students who worked so enthusiastically for me: Alisa DiBenedetto, Sarah Goodes and Neil Siviter. I was particularly proud of the work ethic displayed by these bright young students.

Rich Stivrins, our local association president, managed the get-out-the-vote program, and obviously managed it well. It's impossible to name all the scrutineers, but I certainly thank them for all the time they spent away from their families.

Campaigns cost money, and my friend Tony Koziol saw to it that we had all the funds necessary to win in Nipissing.

We met some real regional leaders along the way. Blair Beatty took care of Powassan, and Joe and Jan Bennett taught me everything I needed to know about Trout Creek. Pauline Rochefort and her family handled Astorville, and the mayors and councillors in most other communities took me around to all the local functions.

Finally, there were hundreds of donors who gave their hard-earned money to me so that I could get here today and bring change to Ontario. To them I say, I won't let you down.

While we didn't win enough seats to form the government, we are certainly the party on the rise. I congratulate the 15 new PC members and the entire returning caucus on your election. We were sent here to do a job, and we're well on our way to delivering that message and pushing for change. We will focus on sending Ontario's economy down the right path.

Ladies and gentlemen, the one passion that I have, coming from North Bay and the riding of Nipissing, in a community with 70 mining and manufacturing firms, is indeed the Ring of Fire. I had the great pleasure to fly up to the Ring of Fire this summer—eight flights to get there and back. I have to tell you that as I flew over the Ring of Fire and looked down at the mine site and saw those blue and white tents—it wouldn't mean anything to many of you, but to me it was Canadian Can-Tex, of Rutherglen, Ontario, in the riding of Nipissing. Their tents were on display down there.

As we landed and walked through the mine site, we saw drill rigs and drill rods. Again, there are so many



companies in Nipissing that manufacture drill rods. It's impossible to name them all in this short period of time. But I do tell you that it is for those companies—those men and women and all their employees—that I stand here today to tell you I was elected.

I was elected to represent North Bay, Nipissing, northern Ontario and all of Ontario, but I have to tell you: To me, there is no greater opportunity than that Ring of Fire for our companies in Nipissing and for all of Ontario. So you will find over our term here that that will be a particular passion of mine.

1420

I thank the communities in Nipissing for electing me, and I will bring all of your concerns to Queen's Park.

I thank the government for their work on the Ring of Fire to date and look forward to pushing even deeper, because we need to get there for all of Ontario.

I thank our former member, MPP Monique Smith, former government House leader, for her eight years of service to our community.

My job will be to shine a light on Nipissing, as well as northern Ontario, so that we can deliver on our priorities to all Ontarians. This is going to take a lot of work and a lot of time. This is time I will be away from Patty.

Patty, I know you're home watching on Cogeco in Corbeil today, and I want to tell you the same thing I said to you when I ran for my two terms in the mayor's chair of North Bay: Thanks so much, babe, for sharing this duty with me and for allowing so many people into our lives. I love you, Patty.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments? The member from—I hope I've got this right—Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** You have it right.

I'd like to thank the member from Nipissing for sharing his time with me today. I'd also like to take this opportunity and thank the constituents of Elgin–Middlesex–London for putting their trust in me to be their voice here in the hallowed halls of Queen's Park.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may not know this but the Speaker and I share the same predecessor, the Honourable Steve Peters. After many years of public service at the municipal and provincial levels government, Steve is now embarking on a new chapter of life, and on behalf of the constituents of Elgin–Middlesex–London, I wish him well.

My inaugural speech will address the speech from the throne.

At the turn of the last century, my grandfather, Charles Yurek, a young man in his mid-teens, left Poland for Canada alone in search of a better life and opportunity. He was a hard-worker, travelling in the country, working physically demanding jobs and working with the railroad. By luck of an introduction by friends, he met my grandmother, also from Poland, Josephine Bus. They settled in the railway capital of Canada, St. Thomas.

They struggled, raising three boys during the Depression. They had their problems, yet my grandfather's resolve was unbreakable as he laboured to put food on

his family's table and ensure not only a better life for himself but for the boys he and Josephine are were raising. Charles and Josephine Yurek instilled not only a solid work ethic in their sons but a sense of community and understanding of the importance of giving back. My grandfather built bikes for the neighbourhood children while my grandmother served to aid new immigrants seeking to settle in St. Thomas.

During these difficult years their door was always open to neighbours in need. Not one was ever turned away when they needed something to eat.

Such compassion and hard work rubbed off on my father, Ed, who in 1963 opened Yurek Pharmacy. He took a chance. He was diligent in his profession and gave superior customer service. His generation was fortunate. Entrepreneurialism could flourish without the worry and threat of government interference and red tape.

I am lucky to have a great family and live in the best country in the world. I was born and raised in St. Thomas and up until October 6 worked as a pharmacist at Yurek Pharmacy, which I co-own with my brother Pete.

I myself come from a large family: three older brothers, two older sisters. Each has been successful in their respective career and family life, and I look to them for guidance and support.

I am passionate about my profession. I have worked in my family's small, independent pharmacy since I was six years old. I began working on Sundays doing odd jobs while my dad looked after the inventory. It has been and will continue to be a part of me.

In the past 16 years, my brother and I have created jobs employing up to 60 people and have opened a home health care store in London. I am proud of the accomplishments, building on the success of my father. Yurek Pharmacy, an independent pharmacy, celebrates 50 years of business in 2013.

I stand before the Legislature today as I begin a new chapter in my life. My reasons are simple: I want a better future for my daughter, a future where there is a sound and meaningful education system that provides the tools and content to learn what is needed to grow and compete in the global market. I want her to have a good-paying job and the ability to stay and work in rural Ontario. Sadly, I do not see this happening under the current direction of the province. We need to stop mortgaging our future generations. I believe, like my constituents, that we need change, positive change for the benefit of all Ontario families, and that is why I am here today.

My parents were very supportive of me being interested in politics, but at the time of going to university they knew my passion and interest in pharmacy. My mother tactfully educated me on the notion that if I did eventually run for public office and it did not work out for me, as a pharmacist I would have something to fall back on. I thank my parents for their insight, and it was the right decision. In fact, I believe being a pharmacist and being an active member of the community has prepared me well for the job at hand.



After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1995, I began work at the Yurek Pharmacy. As a pharmacist, I began to meet many people of the community; became a member of the Knights of Columbus; joined the local Alzheimer's board, which I chaired for seven years; and joined the Rotary Club, because I believed in their motto, "Service before self." I held many positions in the club, including president and chair of their local music festival.

I've also served as chair of the St. Thomas and District Chamber of Commerce. It was here that my eyes were opened to government policy which has decimated the manufacturing sector and single-handedly paralyzed small business. I do not agree with the government of the last eight years; I want to see change. I've always believed in the PC Party, and I believe in Tim Hudak.

While my riding includes parts of London, it is mainly small-town, rural Ontario. There are many positive highlights of my riding: Mackies in Port Stanley, a family-owned independent business for 100 years, caterers to beachgoers and tourists. Families travel to the beach for their famous French fries and orangeade. Summertime as a child was playing soccer and visiting Shaw's Ice Cream to get a milkshake or an Elgin Special after a warm day. Today, after coaching my own daughter's soccer team, we still go to Shaw's, an independent, strong family business in Elgin county, for a milkshake.

We enjoy visiting Ferguson's farms to buy strawberries in the spring, corn in the summer and pumpkins in the fall. I would be remiss if I didn't note the apple-picking season throughout our county—many, many apple orchards available, many varieties.

Our family has a tradition of preparing dill pickles every July, when the cucumbers are ready. Living in rural Ontario allows us to access fresh, locally grown ingredients. We drive to the eastern portion of the riding, past Aylmer, to the Mennonite community and get fresh cucumbers out of the field and cut our own dill for the pickling.

It is the people and small businesses in our communities that make living in our riding special. London brings a bit of the big city, if you will, to our area, yet smaller areas like Lambeth keep their small-town appeal. Recently I participated in Harvestfest, and despite Lambeth being part of London, the fair felt like many of the small-town fall fairs that I have seen through Thorndale to Rodney. I've learned a lot about the issues facing the families in my riding in politics, and what must be manoeuvred these past few months.

Family plays the most crucial role in ensuring that I'm able to do the best job for the constituents of the riding. I've been married for 10 years to my wife, Jenn, and we have a beautiful daughter, seven-year-old Maggie. I didn't realize the effects that politics has on a seven-year-old. After the election, her teacher pulled me aside and said she congratulated Maggie on my win. Maggie replied that there was only one bad thing about her dad winning the election. I figured there was a problem with

her being upset that I'd be away from home quite a bit, but I was wrong. My daughter told her teacher that the worst thing about her dad winning the election was that I would now have to work with Dalton McGuinty. This story shows the support and encouragement that even children provide in political life.

Our riding has fallen on tough times with all the job losses. We are one of the hardest hit in the area. People suffer with the stress of job loss and the inability to pay their bills and mortgages, which in turn ripples throughout the local economy. I believe in the local potential for my riding. I know we can be productive and contribute significantly to Ontario's economy, but we need the type of leadership that encourages, not discourages, private investment and job creation.

1430

Small businesses will be the job creators and bring our economy back. We need government to lower the regulatory burden so that Ontario's entrepreneurship is able to grow. Small businesses are the ones who sponsor our hockey, basketball, soccer and football teams. They're the first ones to donate door prizes for all our community events. Often, small business owners are looked on for help by the municipalities to find solutions to their problems.

I would like to point out that farms are also small businesses. We need to make farming sustainable so that the next generation can take over the farm and continue these businesses in our communities.

I will be diligent in my work to ensure that we have a sustainable health care system. I worked at it every day. I know the problems and the waste that continues to exist. It must stop. We must have the willingness to change health care for the good and for the people.

There's too much bureaucracy in the system, and we need to get more money going to front-line health care providers. Health care is important to everyone. We need it, now that the boomer generation is using the system more, but it needs to be available for future generations as well. Continuing to throw money at problems is not the solution, nor is scandal that wastes billions of dollars in the system.

Education is also important to me. I'm a dad, and I want the best for my daughter. We need to ensure that the resources and technology that students in urban ridings have is available to those in the rural system, especially the single-school communities.

We need to take a firm stance on bullying. Technology today allows for bullying to occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. It is time to protect our children and remove the bullies from our schools. Give the teachers and principals the tools they need, and ensure that they use them to protect our children.

I look forward to working with the members present today to make the riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London a better place to live. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Comments?  
The member for Beaches–East York.



**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—I've been waiting a long time to say those words.

I'd like to commend the two new members, from Nipissing and from Elgin–Middlesex–London, for their inaugural speeches here in the House. I listened intently to what they both had to say.

The member from Nipissing talked about his family and his friends. He gave us literally an entire list, I think, of the people who live in and around North Bay. I commend him for having such knowledge and remembrance of all the people who worked on his campaign.

He closed off, toward the end, talking about a very important aspect of Ontario life, or one that conceivably could be, and that is the Ring of Fire. He talked about how important it is for this province to develop the Ring of Fire, and I am in complete agreement with him. That is one of the key aspects of our economy that has to succeed, not only for the people of this province but especially for the people who live around it: the First Nations communities around Marten Falls (Ogoki), which is the closest town, and the others that are around that ring.

I read with some dismay, yesterday, speculation that some of the mining operation and some of the smelting procedure is being considered to be sent to China. I hope, for the member's sake, that it is all done in northern Ontario, in Nipissing, Sudbury, Timmins or any other place where we have the facility to do it.

I listened to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. He started off by talking about his predecessor, Steve Peters, who of course is no stranger to this House, and he went on to talk about his life as a pharmacist. As I listened to him talk about his family, it became abundantly clear that this new member is a true believer in what he stands for in terms of his party and its platform. He is a man to be reckoned with, I am sure, and I hope that he gets many opportunities to speak in this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further comments?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It's nice to see you in the Speaker's chair enforcing the rules.

First of all, I want to welcome the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London and the member from Nipissing. You are embarking on an incredible opportunity that the people in your ridings have given you. I wish the members incredible success in their personal goals for their ridings and in being able to achieve the type of prosperity that I'm sure the people of the riding who elected you to come here want for their particular riding.

I want to focus a few comments about the member for Nipissing and what he said, only because there has been a strong bond between us over many, many years. I knew Vic's dad, and the member from Nipissing is right: His father would be very proud of him. In fact, his father is very proud of him and is probably looking down from heaven, without any doubt at all as far as I'm concerned,

with much love, a great deal of respect and an admiration for a job well done. There's absolutely no question about that.

I'm glad the member for Nipissing mentioned Monique Smith. We know they had a unique partnership, but it was a good partnership for the people of North Bay.

You will notice, Speaker, that I'm not being at all political in this, nor will I be, because this is a maiden speech, where the member gets the opportunity to outline and suggest his goals for his riding.

Finally, the member for Nipissing, Vic, mentioned his wife, Patty. I know Patty very, very well. She is an incredibly supportive person for Vic and for the people of North Bay, and it's no wonder that he ended off by simply saying, "Patty, I love you"—because their love is truly a very, very strong love, and they support each other.

I welcome the member from Nipissing and the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London to the House. Good luck as we pursue that which is in the best interests of all Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to comment on our two new members—two of our 16 new members—in their initial, maiden speeches: the member from Nipissing, Vic Fedeli, and the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Jeff Yurek. They are two very fine members, as I think you learned a bit from their maiden speeches.

It is interesting how much family has played a part in their coming to this place. I know Vic mentioned his father, Hub Fedeli: I think just after he passed away, Vic was not wearing his trademark yellow tie, and I made a comment about it, not realizing that for many, many years his father had tied his tie for him each day. The sign that he wasn't wearing a tie was because his father had just passed away, and of how close his family is to him.

I had the pleasure of going with the member from Nipissing to the Ring of Fire. He was very excited about finding these tents from North Bay and various products made in North Bay and Nipissing that were on-site at this mine site, and I'm sure he will do good work in furthering that.

I think we learned a lot about the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I've been to schools, and you get asked by the kids, "What are the qualifications necessary to be an MPP?" I think the biggest qualification you need is some life experience. Certainly, the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London demonstrated that he has got a tremendous amount of life experience as an active member of so many different community organizations, as a pharmacist, and some real-life experience in business, dealing with the rules and regulations that you need to deal with in this province.

Congratulations to both. I'd note that the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London is keeping up the tradi-

tion of doing a good advertisement for his riding and promoting Ontario-grown products as well as the former member used to do. It's just a real pleasure to have these two new members here in the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a pleasure to hear the member from Nipissing explain and talk to us about his family. You can feel, just by the way he delivered his speech, how important family is to him, and all the more power to him. He also gave us an extensive list of his supporters, and here again you could feel that they were more than supporters; they were friends, and they have personal meaning to him. I thank him for sharing that with us. It sure was a long list, so you're very well liked in your community, and you will be very well liked here too, once people get to know you.

I've had the pleasure to be on the set of Steve Paikin with you. I think that was the first time we met officially, and right away I knew that we would be good friends. I liked the way that you handled the questions. We have different parties, different views as to how things would move forward, but you certainly have a very human way of moving things forward and bringing your thoughts forward.

1440

I knew you when you were the mayor of North Bay. I heard you on CBC numerous times. I saw you on the news as well. I have no doubt that you will be representing the people of Nipissing with—you'll be a good member for them.

For the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, I very much look forward to meeting your daughter. She has a very good sense of humour, and I love people with a good sense of humour. This little joke you shared with us was certainly priceless, and I will remember this for a long time and I look forward to seeing her. If you ever bring her to Queen's Park, make sure to introduce her to me. I would love to meet her.

Welcome, both of you, to Queen's Park, and—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** She's on Comedy Central next week.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Our colleague says she's on Comedy Central next week. It was pretty funny. I laughed, anyway.

Welcome to Queen's Park. I think you will do good for your ridings, both of you. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further comments?

Two-minute response: the member from Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker. To our member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, I enjoyed your inaugural speech very much. I feel more familiar with your riding today, and I can hardly wait to get there and to have you treat us to some of the Ontario products that you spoke about.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Especially those milkshakes.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Exactly.

To the member from Beaches–East York: I assure you that communication with the First Nations is of paramount importance in dealing with this Ring of Fire. I view it as a real opportunity for them to have a true stake in Ontario's future. I really look forward to hearing more from you on that.

To the member from Nickel Belt: Thank you very much for your comments. You said something on air that day that I really took to heart: When you were talking about the toing and froing within the Legislature you said, "Where else can you go to work and yell at your co-workers and not get fired?" It was just really quite interesting to hear your comment, and that really did sink in with me. That sunk in with me very much, and I really appreciate it.

To my friend the member from Sudbury: I had the greatest honour, first of all, serving as mayor of the city of North Bay, but being able to work with you as the minister. You paid attention to North Bay, you always had time for me as mayor, my council, my administrators. I always appreciated your professionalism, and I look forward to a long and wonderful career sitting across from you, on either side. But I really appreciated your openness.

In the last seconds, Speaker, I would like to say, on a personal note: Yes, my father is watching today. Rick did come to my dad's funeral and, sadly, I had the opportunity to return the courtesy at his mother's funeral. So, we do have a bit of a bond. We'll try not to let that get too deep into our way, but I hope it gets a lot into our way so that we always remember that friendship and friendly nature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The afternoon has been truly enjoyable. I've learned a lot about four new members to this House. Now, it is my pleasure to bring us back to the speech from the throne, so I hope everybody will enjoy that just as much.

The first thing I would like to talk about comes on page 7, when they say, and I'll read just one paragraph from the throne speech that goes: "In combination with this new tax credit"—they're talking about the healthy homes renovation tax credit—"your government will move to increase home care services for seniors."

"These two initiatives would improve seniors' quality of life by allowing them to stay in their own homes longer and provide a real, tangible benefit to taxpayers by saving long-term-care costs."

I was really happy to see that little bit about the health care system in the throne speech. Our home care system is certainly in need of attention. I would actually say that, frankly, our home care system is broken. Although the government has increased the funding going into home care—and apparently, by what I read in the throne speech, is about to continue to invest in home care, which I wholly support—the way the system is working now, it is not working. We are not getting quality care for the money we pay.



We spend close to \$2 billion a year from the Ministry of Health for home care services. This amount has increased dramatically under the leadership of the McGuinnty government. Unfortunately, for the amount of money more that we have invested, we did not get more hands-on care.

You see, way back in 1996, Ontario embarked on this privatization of our home care system. We introduced the competitive bidding system. What the competitive bidding system is, Mr. Speaker, is that companies that offer home care services bid for the contract. The idea, back then, was that if different companies outbid one another, the taxpayers would get some savings. It was a PC government who brought forward the competitive bidding process, and what we saw in Ontario was almost the complete elimination of the not-for-profit sector.

The for-profits came into Ontario with a vengeance. All of the big American companies that provide home care bid on all of those contracts, and when you read those contracts you figured, "My goodness, they have cloned Mother Teresa. The care that we're going to be providing in Ontario will be equal to none." The compassion was dripping off of the pages. It was a thing of beauty to read. Then reality set in.

This experiment has failed, Mr. Speaker. We have now a for-profit-dominated home care system, where the home care providers cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce. Back then—I can speak for my own area in Sudbury—we had VON, which provided home care. VON had been providing home care for a hundred years. They had staff that worked home care as career home care workers. They were paid a decent salary; they had a pension plan; they had benefits. They had mainly women there that made a career of it. They became really, really good at providing home care services. That's all they did and they did it with passion, because this is what they liked to do, and we had very good home care services in Ontario delivered by the not-for-profits, which were able to recruit and retain a stable workforce, which were able to give us quality care.

What have we got now? A whole bunch of for-profit agencies. A few not-for-profits have survived, but they're very few and far between, and each and every one of them is not able to recruit, is not able to retain. I can talk about the Red Cross, a not-for-profit. Last week—actually, today, now that I think of it—they are celebrating the graduation of four classes of PSWs. PSW stands for personal support workers. They are the bread and butter of our home care system. They are the workers that do most of the work, that go into our parents' home or grandparents' home and provide the care.

Four full classes: Parry Sound, North Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. Four classes. They're in Sudbury today celebrating the class that is graduating. Out of the 30 or so graduating, you know how many of them are staying in home care? Out of 30, you figure 25 or 26? Zero. The minute they graduate, they leave the sector.

Red Cross, like everybody else, has to compete under the bidding system to get a contract to offer home care

services. They tried to do their best, but the bidding system has basically brought us to a race to the bottom, a race to the bottom where nobody—not nobody; there are some—but very few people stay.

1450

Do you know what that means, Mr. Speaker? That means that when my 90-year-old—he's about to be 91—father-in-law has somebody come and help him with his bath, every third week or so, he's stripped naked in front of a pure stranger because every three weeks he has a new worker who comes to help him with his bath. He doesn't like to strip naked in front of a stranger every three weeks; he doesn't like that at all, but this is what they all have to do because they're forever recruiting and training new home care workers, because our home care system is broken, and it needs to be fixed.

It is one part of the health care system that is mentioned in the throne speech, but it is not mentioned in the way that I would like it to be. It is mentioned in the way that we need to invest more; I agree 100%. If we had a strong and robust home care system, we could do way better.

If you ask any of your moms and dads and aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers where they want to stay, they want to stay home. Never, never underestimate the power of home; it is really, really strong. It keeps us young. It keeps us wanting to keep on going, because this is home and home matters. This is where they want to stay; this is where they want to live.

But as they become frailer, sometimes they need a little bit of help. This is where home care comes in, and you would wish for home care to be there and provide the services that, frankly, they've paid for. For all of the years of their life, they paid taxes; they contributed toward the home care system. Now they need a little bit of help, for a bath, to check on their medication, maybe help with a little bit around the house as well, to keep them safe in their own home. But we have this continuously revolving door.

I can speak of my own experience of going over to my in-laws' and seeing a little bit of a bedding incident. I threw the whole thing in the wash and said, "Well, when the home care worker comes, all she'll have to do is put it in the dryer, and then she can put the sheets and everything back on the bed." The home care worker didn't show up. My mother-in-law, who is not quite five feet tall, cannot bend over into the laundry tub to retrieve the laundry in there, so it just sits there until somebody from the family will go. You thought, "Well, this only happens once in a while." Absolutely not. It happens all the time. Not so bad, a load of laundry stays there; it's not going to kill you. But I expect better than this. I expected the worker to come.

I don't blame the worker; I don't blame her at all. She gets a call from Walmart; she will make more money there, and she won't have to travel. My riding is huge and there is lots of rural area in Ontario. By the time they travel, they can work a 10-hour shift, and they get paid for six of them. Those are not good working conditions.



We all value the work that the home care worker does. How come we don't reflect this in the way we pay them? How come we don't reflect this in the type of benefits that we give to them? My mother-in-law couldn't believe it when she found out how much her home care worker was being paid. She said, "But I pay my cleaning lady more than that." Yes, you do, and so do I. Do we blame them for wanting to move on, wanting to go? The long-term-care sector pays a little bit more. If you can get a job in the hospital, it will pay even more for doing exactly the same job: providing care to people who need it.

But if you happen to be providing care in a home care setting, in the community, you have those for-profit companies that fall over one another for the contracts. I may not be the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I'm thinking that if they fight for those contracts, it's probably because they are making money out of those contracts. Otherwise, they wouldn't fight for them, would they? They would let them run to somebody else. But no, when a contract comes up for bidding, they fight one another tooth and nail to get those contracts.

They write up those proposals that are just awe-inspiring. "We are finally going to get good care," and then the reality sets in. The reality sets in in my riding, where this woman depends on chronic home care. She gets them daily. She is severely disabled. She is very young, very joyful and is enjoying life to the fullest, but she needs help. She phones her mom at 4 a.m., after waking up in her wheelchair; her worker never came to put her to bed. So it's 4 o'clock in the morning and her mother, who lives close to where I live, in Walden, has to do the half-hour drive into town to where her daughter is to help her daughter transfer from her wheelchair to her bed. By that time—I don't know if you know anything about people with disability. If you sit without moving for too long, you risk getting what most people call bedsores, which basically are big trouble if you are disabled.

The cases go on like this, where you cannot depend on the home care system; you are forever being cancelled.

I have another elderly gentleman in Lively who looks after his wife. They have the most cheerful home, with birds and cats. They're just very, very cheerful people. They are quite elderly, but he manages to look after her as best he can. He cannot lift her, but once the home care worker comes and helps to transfer her into a wheelchair, he looks after her all day long and looks after her needs. They're very happy to be together in their home. But every second weekend, the worker doesn't show. Every second weekend, it's the same thing. You try to connect with the caseworker, who is nowhere to be found. By the time she calls you back, it's Monday, and she has spent another three days without home care, another three days without being able to go from her chair back into her bed, or vice versa, to come out of bed. But most of the time, they don't show up at night, so she's stuck in her wheelchair all night long. He's not able to transfer her because he's too frail, so he ends up calling the neighbours; he ends up calling anybody who will come and help. This is

not a dignified way to look after your wife. They are supposed to get home care, but the home care system is broken.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Could the members on the government side please—there are too many sidebars. Could you please take it outside? I'd appreciate it. Thank you. I can't hear the speaker.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was talking about a part of the throne speech—they put it under the fourth item in the throne speech—that had to do with the focus on improving quality of life for families. I couldn't agree more that to improve quality of life for a lot of families in Ontario is to strengthen our home care system, to build a strong and robust home care system that will be dependable, that will be there for the people who need it.

Well, in order to reach this, in order to reach quality care, you need continuity of care. If you don't have continuity of care, you will never have quality care. We are not building widgets here; we are looking after people. And to look after people, there is a human bond that takes place. You trust your worker. They get to know you. They get to know what hurts, what doesn't, and what kind of transfer works good and what kind of transfer doesn't work good. They get to know your bathroom and how they can help you go from your chair to the tub or the shower or whatever else. But when you have a new worker coming every two or three weeks, it just doesn't work.

I just got a present delivered all of a sudden. Thank you.

So it just doesn't work. You need the continuity of care.

What I'm urging the government to do is really, when they say that they are going to increase home care services for seniors, don't just invest more money into a broken system. Look into how we strengthen what we have, so at the end of the day, we deliver what we want to deliver, which is quality care to the people who need it. They deserve nothing less.

**1500**

Ça me fait toujours plaisir, monsieur le Président, quand je vois que dans le discours du trône on parle un petit peu—pas beaucoup, mais on parle un petit peu—du service de santé. Plus précisément, on parle des soins à domicile. Ce n'est pas la première fois que j'en parle ; j'ai l'impression que ce ne sera pas la dernière fois non plus. Le système de soins à domicile en Ontario ne fonctionne plus. Il est brisé. Ça ne fonctionne pas.

En ce moment, les soins à domicile sont dominés par des agences à profit. Donc, quand on sait que c'est une agence à profit qui offre le service, la priorité numéro un, ce n'est pas nécessairement la qualité des soins ; la priorité numéro un, c'est de faire de l'argent.

Je sais que le gouvernement de M. McGuinty a beaucoup investi. Pour les soins à domicile, maintenant, on investit près de deux milliards par année. Ça a augmenté de beaucoup, de façon importante, mais même



si on y a investi beaucoup plus, on ne voit pas vraiment sur le terrain tellement d'amélioration du côté de la qualité des soins, et pas beaucoup d'amélioration du côté des soins à domicile.

Qu'est-ce qui arrive? C'est que les agences essaient de recruter, essaient de maintenir des travailleurs et travailleuses en place, mais ont beaucoup de difficulté parce que les conditions de travail, franchement, sont médiocres. Donc, qu'est-ce qui arrive? La travailleuse à domicile ne se montre pas. La personne qui en dépend finit souvent par avoir des problèmes; elle finit par se rendre à l'urgence de l'hôpital; elle finit par être admise à l'hôpital, et là, elle devient un cas de personne qu'on ne trouve pas que c'est sécuritaire de retourner à la maison, parce que c'est là que les problèmes ont commencé, et cette personne-là est prise dans un lit d'hôpital. Elle ne veut pas être là. Elle veut, comme toutes les autres personnes, demeurer à la maison, demeurer chez elle, mais ce n'est pas une option, parce que pour demeurer chez elle, on aurait besoin d'un système de soins à domicile qui est robuste. On aurait besoin d'un système de soins à domicile qui soutient les personnes, mais à tout bout de champ, parce que les compagnies ne sont pas capables de recruter et de garder leurs employés, ou bien les employés ne se montrent pas.

J'en ai eu plusieurs expériences moi-même. Mes beaux-parents utilisaient les services à domicile, et j'ai beaucoup, beaucoup de gens qui demeurent dans mon comté qui sont venus me voir pour me dire, «Ma fille avait besoin des soins à domicile. Elle est restée dans sa chaise toute la nuit. Elle m'a appelé en plein milieu de la nuit pour me dire que la personne des soins à domicile n'était pas venue. Elle avait besoin d'aide pour retourner dans son lit».

J'ai des exemples de couples âgés, couples aînés, qui demeurent ensemble. Lui s'occupe de sa femme et c'est la même histoire: à toutes les deux fins de semaine, la travailleuse ne se montre pas. Lui n'est pas capable de la transférer de sa chaise à son lit, puis là les problèmes commencent.

On pourrait faire une grosse différence dans la qualité de vie des gens si on changeait la structure de nos soins à domicile. J'espère que la petite ligne qu'on a retrouvée dans le discours du trône au sujet des soins à domicile ne se traduira pas tout simplement par un investissement financier dans un système qui ne fonctionne plus, mais vraiment de regarder à restructurer à fond le système des soins à domicile pour qu'on offre des soins de qualité aux gens qui en ont besoin. On ne leur doit rien de moins.

Merci, monsieur le Président.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further comments?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** My thanks and congratulations to the member for Nickel Belt. Congratulations on your election victory. The member and I worked together closely on a number of issues and I'm sure that we'll continue to do so.

In terms of your remarks today, thank you very much for, up front, acknowledging that, indeed, more dollars

are certainly going into the health care system. I think all of us want to see the system work better, and being able to help more people is one of the goals that I think all of us in this Legislature share. We all recognize how valuable home care can be in terms of helping the challenges that we have in our hospital system, particularly in our acute care hospital system.

Like so many people in this chamber, I would say, certainly listening to those who have been speaking even today, I'm very grateful for the home care system in terms of how, when my mother was very much in need and we very much wanted to keep my mother at home, the home care system was incredibly helpful. We were very fortunate that, indeed, she was able to find a home care worker who was consistently there, with whom she developed a very positive relationship, and one understands how important that is. So there's no question that that's something we all very much agree on.

In terms of our overall priorities, I think, again, despite the differences that we may have here amongst the three parties in the Legislature, we do understand how important health care is; we do understand that, obviously, as a priority in terms of how we spend those dollars in the health care system, they need to be spent wisely, if not more wisely. Again, I think we share our goals. That's certainly the case as well for education.

Certainly as northerners—I will say that to my northern colleagues in the Legislature and all of us who represent the north—we recognize how important it is also to make decisions that are going to be creating jobs and improving the economy in northern Ontario, despite all of the challenges we've seen in the past.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further comments? The member from Grey-Bruce-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Close: Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Speaker, but you're right on. Thank you very much, Speaker, and congratulations to you in your official appointment. I wish you well.

Congratulations to my colleague from Nickel Belt. I share your sense of humour, and I hope that the Premier also takes that in stride and understands where Jeff's daughter was coming from. I also share your passion, and I commend you for your passion particularly for health care. As the deputy critic, I look forward to working with you collaboratively to ensure that our system is the best it can be.

I noted in your earliest comments that you referenced taxpayer savings. I want to just say that it was my pleasure to vote with your party to remove the HST from the home hydro bill, and we'll continue to do that. I would actually reach out to my colleagues across the floor from the Liberals and respectfully ask them to reconsider and respect the will of the voter on that initial bill.

You then went on to talk a little bit about competitive bidding, and I believe that we need to have competitive bidding to ensure that we have value for our dollar. Every



taxpayer dollar should be spent wisely, frugally and practically.

You then talked a little bit about the for-profit, and when there's competitive bidding that's for profit, I think we have to always remind ourselves: Who do we run to when we have the big fundraisers? We run to big business and small business and say, "Please give to us." When we run a little hockey tournament, we run to the businesses and we say, "Please give us a handout." When we need something else, we run and we say, "Please give." I think we have to understand who supports charity. Where does the money come from? Who creates the jobs if we don't have a strong economy, if we do not have those businesses to be able to fund?

So I think we always have to look and realize that if people do not have money, they're not helping the less fortunate, and, in fact, they are more harmed by not having a thriving economy than we are.

Our PC priority is to create an environment whereby there's opportunity for people to make a good living and to have the funding and the support so that they can support those and help those who are in trouble and have a little bit of a need for help. If we utilize taxes in a practical manner, I believe we have lots of money to ensure that we have the best province to live, work and play.

I look forward to working with you and all of my colleagues who have been privileged to be elected to make sure that we do have the best province possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Well, I've had a lot of experience in the community sector of home care for the last 21 years. I can tell you that the competitive bidding process has seriously eroded health care not only for seniors, but for every patient that gets discharged from a hospital, for every patient that's waiting to go into a nursing home, because not only were personal support workers affected in this process, but RNs, RPNs and physiotherapists were all affected. Where they used to have a full-time job with pensions and benefits, they're now working at two or three agencies to try to make a buck, to get full-time hours and to make enough money to support their families. We lost strong, stable agencies across this province, non-profit, from VON and St. Elizabeth, who had long-term employees who knew about giving appropriate, good care to patients and to seniors. It is piece-work now, I can tell you.

I don't know if any of you ever worked in a canning factory in your youth, but living in Niagara, we had many. I worked in the canning factory, and the kind of care we're giving now is like a conveyor belt in a canning factory. It's not right, it's not dignified, and our seniors deserve better.

1510

My mother had surgery a couple of months ago. She needed dressing changes every day. She had five caregivers over seven days, and the priority was to "make sure you fill out your evaluation; we want to make sure

that you got good care." Well, how do you get good care when you have a different person going into an 86-year-old woman's home five times over seven days? It's not right, and we need to fix it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker, and my personal congratulations to you on being named the Acting Speaker. It's a real pleasure to see you in the chair, and it's also a pleasure to respond to my colleague from Nickel Belt, particularly now that I'm at least in close physical proximity. I used to be in another postal code at the other end of the chamber, and it's nice to actually be able to look at you so closely.

The member brought forward a number of very interesting remarks on the speech from the throne. I'd just like to put some of them into the context that we see them in my home city of Mississauga, facing much the same problems that she brought up, in 2003.

We were able to deliver, ahead of schedule and under budget, a major expansion to the Credit Valley Hospital, which was announced in 2005; we got construction started in 2007, ahead of schedule. And it was completed and opened in May of this past year, 2011, ahead of schedule and under budget. The formal opening was just in November.

It's made a big difference in our community. Where we traditionally deliver some 5,500 babies per year at Credit Valley Hospital, we had, prior to phase 2, a facility that would only allow us—it was only built for a capacity of 4,700, so that gave us some real scheduling problems. We've gone from 365 beds to 472, adding complex continuing care, and have shown that it is possible to renew and properly fund the system working within the constraints that we have here in the province of Ontario and working with the budget that we have.

I'd also like, in my last seconds, to acknowledge the many residents of Streetsville, Meadowvale and Lisgar who greeted me, my spouse, Andrea, and our big fuzzy cat, Obi-Wan, in yesterday's Santa Claus parade.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nickel Belt has a two-minute response.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I will start by thanking the Minister of Natural Resources for his comments. We have worked together well on a number of issues, and I hope this good relationship will continue. The challenges in northern Ontario often surround equity of access when it comes to health care, but we also have a major challenge with our forestry industry, which has a really tough time rebounding from the last recession. I hope we're able to help that along.

For the member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, the idea that competitive bidding added anything to our health care system is wrong. Now, rather than sharing best practices in home care, they hide them from one another and consider them as a competitive advantage. This is not how our health care system works. In our health care system you bring everybody together. You share best practices so we can all learn and we can all



benefit from it. But none of this can happen when you have companies bidding over one another. They want the competitive advantage; therefore, they withdraw best practices till forever, so that they can use it to their fiscal advantage. When money comes ahead of care, you never get quality.

The member from Welland: Thank you so much for your comments. My colleague certainly talks from well-known experience, having been, and still is, a nurse for decades, with in-depth knowledge of how our home care system works, as well as how our home care system could be improved. Before we invest in a broken system, let's look at how we could all make it better.

Then my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville: Yes, part of our health care system needs renewing. I'm happy that it worked out in your riding. I want it to work in all of the ridings.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Speaker, I'll be dividing my time with the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

As I stand here, I cannot help but reflect on the incredible journey that has brought me here. It's a journey that began when I first got off a plane at Pearson International Airport one August afternoon many, many years ago. I have to say, it was love at first sight. The stunning lake, the beautiful buildings, the clean, orderly streets—it was all so different from the India I had left behind. It's a love that I have to say has deepened over time, but it's also been tested.

My first shock was my new home. It was a basement apartment with cockroaches. But I was young, and I thought, "You know what? I'm going to get a good job and rent a better place." So I went about looking for a job, and that's when I came up against that very famous question, "But do you have Canadian experience?" Of course I didn't, so that went nowhere.

I thought, "If I can't get a decent job, I'm going to study and upgrade my skills." I thought about doing an MBA, and that's when I found out that my CA degree from India and my B.Com. were equal to grade 13 in Ontario.

There I was in my basement apartment with no job prospects and apparently no educational prospects. Needless to say, I was a little disappointed.

But what's really remarkable about my story is the fact that it's just so ordinary. It's the story of countless immigrants through the ages, no matter where they came from or whether they came here in the 1800s, the 1900s or the 21st century. It's in fact the story of many people who live in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville, stories of the incredible struggle it can be to build a new life in a new country.

But they're also stories of hope and courage, because no matter how bad things get, we never go back and we don't give up because we believe that tomorrow will be better than today; if not for us, then for our children. That, to me, is the promise of Canada.

To someone like me, the enduring promise of the new world and the enduring promise of a country like Canada is that it's one of the few places in the world where what you know is more important than who you know; where your father's name doesn't matter, but your ability does matter; where, if you're willing to work hard and willing to work smart, you will get ahead. That is the promise of Canada.

But I'll be honest: It's a tough promise to keep, because even in good times, human nature conspires against it, and in tough times, it's often broken. That's why, when people ask me, "Now that you're a newly elected member, what are you going to do for your constituents?" there's a number of things I can rattle off, but deep down what I really want to do is renew my commitment to this promise of Canada, to the ideal that the privileges and challenges that come with birth are tempered by a culture of meritocracy or, put very simply, a world where each of us has a fair chance at chasing our dreams and succeeding. I got that chance, but I know there are many who haven't.

In closing, all I'm going to say is that whatever success I've had is not just because I worked hard, although I did, and not just because I persevered, because I did, but also because at crucial times in my life perfect strangers took a chance on me: strangers like the vice-dean of admissions at the University of Toronto, who allowed me to do my MBA even though I was technically only a grade 13; strangers like the librarian who allowed me to borrow books past the due date without paying a fine, because she knew I couldn't afford those books; strangers who helped me in my nomination; the perfect strangers who walked into my campaign office and donated money and countless hours to help me get elected. To each of you who took a chance on me, all I can say is thank you for taking a chance on me. The only way I can repay you is to help others.

To my friends and family, you know and I know that I couldn't have done this without you. To the wonderful people of Mississauga East–Cooksville, all I can say is, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful privilege you've given me. I hope I'll be worthy of it.

Finally, I've been thinking that my story, at its core, is really a love story. It's about the story of falling hopelessly in love with this wonderful country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

1520

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, thank you very much. I'm pleased to be here today and have my first opportunity in the new Parliament to say a few words, speaking to the throne speech.

Let me offer my congratulations to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville on her maiden speech. It was wonderful and heartfelt. Welcome to the Legislature.

Speaker, also, to you, my congratulations. Anything's possible in this place, isn't it? Remarkable. It's wonderful to see you in the chair.



To the other Speakers—I'm not sure who they all are yet, but I'm sure we'll find out in short order—congratulations to you and to all the other members in this place who are back here. Those of you who have been re-elected and were here previously: Welcome. It's nice to be back. Congratulations to everybody who made it through the election.

To the new members who are here for the first time: a special congratulations to all of you. As odd and as raucous, and perhaps even a bit dysfunctional as this place may seem at some times, it's still a tremendous place to be, and, I think, in very short order, that will become obvious to all of you, if it hasn't already. So I offer my congratulations to all of you, especially those who are here for the very first time.

Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity, as I said, to say a few words in response to the throne speech. I know that generally there is a fair bit of latitude given to members when it comes to this particular topic. I walked in during the speech from the member of the third party, and it sounded to me like she was focusing on home care, I think, and health care, and that's fine. We all get to have a bit of latitude here today when we speak on it.

I'm happy to speak a bit about the economy generally and where we find ourselves here in Ontario. These are very difficult times, I think it's fair for everybody to say—perhaps, it would be fair to say, even intimidating times. I know that we all have at least one eye on what's going on in the European Union today—a great deal of concern with what is occurring over there. The fact that, as an economy, we are so incredibly integrated internationally I think perhaps leaves some people wondering what it is we are able to do and what we can control, if anything, when it comes to how we manage and how we function here in the province of Ontario.

One of the members opposite referenced the forestry situation in northern Ontario. I think that's a great example of what many of us feel is beyond our control and the things that we cannot take care of. There are obviously always levers and inputs and policy pieces we can bring forward to try and help, but there are absolutely some things that we simply can't control.

When I think of forestry in northern Ontario—which actually predated the recession, which really hit home in 2008. When you think of forestry, some of the pieces that you can't control, that impact an industry—for one, currency. I've used this example here in the Legislature before. When we were elected in 2003 as a Liberal government, the Canadian dollar was at about 70 cents or 73 cents. Somewhere along the line after 2003—I forget exactly when; 2005, 2006, whenever it was—the Canadian currency peaked at \$1.10, a 35- or 40-cent increase in the value of the Canadian currency relative to the American dollar. What that meant for northern Ontario pulp and paper mills, at least for one in my riding, which was just called Bowater then—a one-cent increase in the value of the Canadian dollar represented a \$3-million to \$4-million expense on their bottom line—one cent; \$3 million to \$4 million.

As I said, we came in at about 70 or 73 cents. It went up at one point and peaked at about \$1.10. On the bottom line of one company—not even the whole company; just one operation, one Bowater plant—it added somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$100 million of expense into their bottom line overnight.

A collapse in the US housing market: All of a sudden, your market's gone. Most of the sawmills in my neck of the woods were Buchanan mills, and 95% of his product—these are mills that had been around for generations—was exported into the United States. When the United States market disappeared, almost overnight—and still, to this point, still today, five and six years later, there is very little, if any, US housing market; still a glut of homes on the housing market. The subprime mortgage crisis has directly impacted that—again, another example of how, when we're looking at global economic forces, sometimes there's just not a whole lot you can do.

I raise these, Speaker, because, quite frankly, people are always looking to place blame. It's interesting that some parties place blame; other parties don't place blame. You get closer to the election and everybody's placing blame. But there are certainly some underpinning and underlying factors that everybody is aware of that you simply can't do a lot about. Those are a couple of them.

I wanted to start, at the beginning of my speech—I want to make one point too to have a little bit of fun. It's the throne speech. I just feel like I need say the word “Kakabeka.” I've got to say Kakabeka. During the election, one of the parties, Speaker—I won't say which one, but it wasn't the official opposition—decided that they were going to distribute a flier in my riding that said, “Mauro only raised the word ‘Kakabeka’ once in the previous eight years when representing the riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan.” It wasn't the official opposition who put the flier out, but I thought I'd better say “Kakabeka” now for the third time so that when we get to the next election, maybe that's one less flier they will be able to put out.

They put out the flier, implying that Kakabeka was its own municipality. In fact, Speaker, Kakabeka is a little hamlet. It's a small core of a very popular place around Thunder Bay, just about 15, 20 miles west of Thunder Bay—a great little place to visit, a great little place to go, Kakabeka Falls. I would guess most people have heard of Kakabeka Falls. It's the fourth time I've said “Kakabeka” now. But what the flier didn't say, Speaker, is that Kakabeka—fifth time I've said it—is part of Oliver Paipoonge. Oliver Paipoonge is one of the ridings sort of southwest, contained within my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. It actually has about 5,000, 6,000, 7,000 people in it. It's quite small by population. Geographically, it's huge, but Kakabeka—sixth time—is actually contained within the municipality of Oliver Paipoonge. So I felt, Speaker, that I wanted to just get that a little bit on the record and say “Kakabeka” for the seventh time today in my speech. Hopefully—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Any hockey players from that area? National Hockey League players?



**Mr. Bill Mauro:** You know what? Mr. Leal knows his hockey. Yes. This is where the Staal family hangs around and came from: Oliver Paipoonge.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I knew that.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** He knew that. That's why he prompted me to say it.

Anyway, Speaker, I thought I'd better get it in there. We've got to have a little fun in this place. We can't be too serious all the time.

As we go through this Parliament, Speaker—and none of us are sure how long it's going to be—I do understand and appreciate that it's different. Actually, I don't mind saying I'm a bit excited by that. I don't know what it's going to bring, but the fact that we're in a minority situation, I think, is going to provide for some very interesting times here in this Legislature. I'm looking forward to that. But I think what the people in the province of Ontario can count on from us in terms of consistency is what we've done for the past eight years. I think we can stand on our record.

The speech earlier when I walked in—I just flew in this morning and came in in the middle of the speech—was talking about a component of health care. I think that if people go back to 2003 when we were first elected as a Liberal majority government, people will know that over the course, from 2003 to 2011 now, health care has been and will remain the number one priority of this Liberal government. I think that if you canvass people, Speaker, and you ask them, almost always what their number one priority is in the province of Ontario, most of the people will tell you, is health care. Now, that may change from time to time. The economy, obviously, is at the forefront of what a lot of people are concerned about, but health care and education are almost always right up there in the number one and number two spots.

I remember that when we first got here, health care was consuming about \$30 billion on an annual basis. I think that now we are approaching \$50 billion; if not there, we're very close to being there. What's interesting about that \$50 billion: It is consuming close to 50% of the total provincial budget.

It's always interesting when we listen to the members on the other side—that's their job; they have to find fault with what we're doing, and that's fair. That's their job. They have to work very hard sometimes to find that. But when they pick on the health care system, Speaker, I think it's always an interesting choice.

I don't mind saying that I had somebody who is a long-time veteran of this place tell me a long time ago, "Bill, you need to remember, health care is always a political loser. It's just matter of how much." He says, "You can never win on health care. It's not about whether you win; it's about how much you lose." It's understandable, when you think about it. It's tangible. As a government, you're tied to it. People understand that you deliver it, and it's an extremely emotional exercise. Anybody who has ever interacted with the health care system—it's extremely emotional, and when you have a bad experience, you wonder what the province is going to do about it.

We should have a little more fun. We heard with some interest, in the leader's debate, when the leader of the third party described a particular interaction she had with the health care system, and it was a very trying and a very emotional—

*Interjections.*

1530

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Well, I—boy, that was amazing what a free pass she got on that one. I don't know how that happened.

Anyway, I take at heart the fact that it was an emotional experience for her, that it was very difficult and that she was speaking truthfully about how difficult an experience it was for her. That's the norm.

But from \$30 billion to \$50 billion—and, as has been expressed here, we anticipate that that, in these very difficult economic circumstances that we find ourselves in, is going to remain the number one priority for us as a Liberal government here in the province of Ontario.

In my local riding I can point to several examples that I'm very proud of, improvements specific to Thunder Bay—Atikokan when it comes to the health care system. The first that I'll reference—and perhaps the only one; I don't have a whole lot of time left; about four and a half minutes—is the provision of angioplasty services at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.

I've been doing this work now for going on 15 years: six on city council and entering my ninth year here in the Legislature. I've made one very clear promise in going on 15 years, and that was in the election of 2003: the provision of angioplasty services at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences. It took us maybe three or four years to get there.

Previous to that provision locally, 500, 600, 700 people a year from Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario had to leave Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario and go to either Ottawa, Toronto or Hamilton for angioplasty services. Not all of them made it. The ones that did go oftentimes could not have a family member attend with them. An extremely emotional, trying, difficult time: If you were lucky, you went and you survived. If you were lucky, a family member could go with you, if they could make it, if they could get off work. If you were lucky, the family member could afford to go and be there with you. At the end, if you were really lucky, it all went well, you all came home together and you were healthy.

Now in Thunder Bay we're providing that service, and have been for three or four years. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of 700 people per year from Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario receive angioplasty services at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. It wasn't happening before. Very recently, we just opened the second cath lab there. I think our government provided about \$10 million in capital money to the hospital. They just announced that opening—I was there; I think it was about six or eight months ago—a second cath lab. And now that number of 500, 600, 700 angioplasties on an annual basis happening at Thunder Bay Regional will be increased even more. That number is going to go up.



Speaker, it's good health care. It's local health care. It's saving lives. And as I like to remind the people in my riding, good health care policy can also be good for the economy. Associated with the opening of that angioplasty suite in Thunder Bay there are around 40 extremely good, high-paying health care jobs. The things to remember is that this isn't adding to the budget. This work was always being done but before it was being done in Hamilton or Ottawa or Toronto, and now it's being done in Thunder Bay. It is a piece that I'm very proud of and I'm happy to report on.

I just want to speak quickly before I wrap up—less than a couple of minutes left—on the debt. We announced just last week that we're on track. The elimination target remains the same. It's a big number; nobody denies that. But what I talk about a little bit when I talk about the debt is, if we look at Ontario in isolation I'm not sure that paints the best picture. It's not the best picture—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** You're overachieving on the debt, Bill.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** My friend across the way—I always like to remind him—here is the comparator I want to use: your federal cousins. I always say, let's talk about the federal cousins.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** It's a big number. Somewhere along the road, he had a bit of a deathbed conversion.

I remember in 2008, on TV, the federal finance minister saying, when the recession was hitting, "Good buying opportunities." That's what he said on national television.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** What'd he say?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** "Good buying opportunities. Get in the stock market. People's pension plans are"—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the member to go through the Chair, not have a direct dialogue across the floor. Thank you.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that.

People's pension plans were going through the floor, their life savings were going through the floor, and the federal finance minister said, "Jump into the stock market. There's good buying opportunities there right now."

My point is that somewhere along the line the federal Conservatives had a conversion. They began investing in infrastructure like we had. They came along late to help us with the forestry sector. They came along late to help us with the auto sector. Ontario, as about 40% of the country's economy, has, interestingly enough, a deficit and a debt that almost mirrors that proportion of our GDP relative to the national debt—somebody as predisposed, ideologically, against deficit and debt as we have probably ever had in the Prime Minister's chair.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from—I've lost it for a minute here.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** You've got it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Elgin—Middlesex—Kent. Middlesex; sorry.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I think I have the toughest riding to remember the name of, but I'll wear a name tag or something. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga East—Cooksville and congratulate you on your inaugural speech. Congratulations, and I'm proud to be part of the same group of MPPs coming to serve our ridings.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yeah, but did you like it?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I did like it. It was a nice speech.

I appreciate that you spoke about family—it shows good, strong character—and I'm glad people took a chance on you so that you could get here today. But I would like to make a note that I hope that you take a chance with me and my riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London. We need to start bringing back jobs to my riding. We need to lessen the regulatory burden that's hampering our small businesses. We need to rein in costs and spending so that my riding has people, and their riding, to take chances on others coming to our communities, so that they can attain what you attained today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** First, I'd like to congratulate the member from Mississauga East—Cooksville for your maiden speech.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Was it good?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** It was good, it was uplifting and it was great to hear about your life and your election campaign.

With respect to the remarks from the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, who said you can't win with health care, well, in fact you can win with health care if you do it right. Way back in the old days, when the LHINs were first formed, it was supposed to be a seamless health care system, so people could move from the various sectors—hospital to home care; home to home care; homes to the hospital—with seamless care. That hasn't happened. There were too many beds closed before the money was invested to make the home care system work. Then we did the contracting out of all those services through an RFP. What that led to is that patients get discharged too early from the hospital because there are no beds, and then they get readmitted because they shouldn't have been discharged. Then they sit in the emergency wards for 15 to 20 hours because there aren't any beds to admit them into the hospital.

When we changed the way home care was delivered, with for-profits, we saw fewer jobs, and so now we have a lot of part-time people out there actually working for two or three agencies, administering care to people without any continuity or sustainability—and the wages are substantially lower in the community sector than they are for the counterparts in the homes and in the hospitals, which is why you can't attract workers to that sector.

So I thank you for the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Richmond Hill.



**Mr. Mario Sergio:** York West.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** York West; sorry.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** That's close; that's close.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** You've got to stop switching ridings.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Can't switch ridings. Mr. Speaker, by the way, this is the time for congratulatory messages all around, starting with you, and of course to all the members who have returned to the House and the wonderful bunch of new members that we have acquired in our democratic process. To everyone back in the House, new and old: Congratulations.

We are debating, if you will, one of the first items, Speaker: the speech from the throne. I've heard the various comments. I have to say, first of all, congratulations to the member from Mississauga East—Cooksville and, of course, the well-established, long-time member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan. He's a champion for the north, and he's a champion for the people up north as well.

Speaker, there is one particular thing with the members who spoke before us, especially the member from Nickel Belt when she said that we have to have continuity. If I had to choose between health care and education, I would have difficulty, because I think they are two particular areas that we just cannot neglect. But the thing is this: If we want to really have continuity in any of the facets in our society here, then we have to make sure that we address each one individually and with care. If we give to one, we've got to take care away from something else. This is a particular time that requires special attention from every member of the House, not only the leaders, Speaker. It is a time when we have to really look into what we want to say or what we want to do, not only as individuals but as parties as well. I hope that this will be the tone we can look forward to and that we do the best we can for all the areas that govern our people.

1540

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to respond to the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan's comments. I found your comments about the exchange rate on the Canadian dollar and the American dollar and the impact it has on natural-resource-based industries very informative, very true and just a statement of reality on what a resource-based economy we have in this country.

His comments were directed at forestry, because that's the natural-resource-based industry where he comes from. In my riding, it is agriculture, and I have lived agriculture first-hand—I am a farmer. So when the exchange rate with our American neighbours goes up dramatically—and we are an export-based nation, based on our natural resources—it can be devastating. On the other hand, it can be wonderful when it goes the other way.

Also, I think we realize we are hewers of wood and drawers of water. We have resources, whether it's agri-

culture, forestry or mining, which is becoming huge in Ontario, and other resources in the nation. That's where our true prosperity comes from.

I found his geography lesson on Kakabeka Falls, which he mentioned seven times, because I counted—I'd be happy to witness that for you anytime. I haven't been there. It sounds like a wonderful place, and I thank you for that.

But since you mentioned the small community you're from, if you'll afford me some liberty, I'd like to mention a small community where I'm from, and that is MacLaren's Landing, where I grew up. It was established in 1826. I've said that once.

Your comments on health care and how expensive it has become—excuse my newness at this, Mr. Speaker; I should be addressing you. Yes, we know it's expensive. Yes, we know it's about 50% of our budget. But when I was campaigning in our election this fall, many people, including doctors, said to me, "What are you going to do about health care?" or "What should a government do?" Several of them said, "Whatever you do, don't spend more money. Use our dollars more wisely." In my community, at the Queensway Carleton Hospital, where my wife works as a nurse, she tells me a story that goes like this, and I think this is very revealing and interesting: There are eight—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Your time is up.

The member has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'd like to begin, Speaker, by congratulating you. I didn't use the previous opportunity to do that, and I'm told that your being Speaker is a bit like the naughtiest boy in the class being made the monitor. So congratulations.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** And you're doing a very good job.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Yes, you are.

I'd also like to congratulate all the new members who made their maiden speeches today: the members from Scarborough—Agincourt, Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Nipissing and Elgin—Middlesex—London.

I also want to just take a minute to say that I'm so impressed by the eloquence of some of the senior parliamentarians. I only hope that one day I'll be able to come close to that. Your ability to think on your feet and debate is pretty impressive.

I'd like to respond to the member from Elgin—Middlesex—London. First, thank you for listening to my speech, because clearly you were one of the few who was listening, and yes, I'd like to take you up on your offer to—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Nobody on your side was listening at all.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'm sorry?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Ignore him.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Yeah, ignore him. Forget him.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I know the member is new, and I would just like to remind her that we don't have cross-dialogue; you go through me. Maybe the senior member took a little advantage of you there.

So maybe you'll come through me when you're talking. Thank you.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Speaker.

Just continuing, I'd like to respond to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London that I'm happy to work with you to help Ontarians, to help create new jobs for all Ontarians. I think our government has a great record when it comes to that. We only have to look at other jurisdictions across the world to know how strong Ontario is doing relative to all other jurisdictions. I think we've got the track record and I'd be happy to work with you. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member for Huron–Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Congratulations on your appointment, Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to speak at this moment.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to be sharing my maiden speech as a well as a few comments to the throne intermittently throughout my speech, but I want to start off by saying that it is an absolute, sincere honour to be here representing the constituents of Huron–Bruce. It is a riding that is absolutely wonderful. I invite you all to tour it at some point. It's known as Ontario's west coast, and there's a reason for that. I will get to that in a moment.

My path to Queen's Park is shared with so many people. I appreciate the opportunity to reflect on that path and to thank the people who made this reality happen.

But first of all, I follow the footsteps of some very amazing people, and I respectfully share with you today that I'd like to recognize Helen Johns and Barb Fisher, and I'm even going to cross the floor and recognize Murray Elston and Murray Gaunt. Those names might ring a bell for some of you.

I have to recognize Helen Johns. She was a mentor of mine—

*Applause.*

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much. Coming from the agri-food industry—

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** How about Carol Mitchell?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I haven't seen her for a while.

But going back to Helen Johns, I have to share with you that coming from the agricultural industry, there are people who claim and stand fast saying that Helen Johns was one of the best agriculture and food ministers this province has ever had, and I'm very proud of her for that. Both Helen and Barb continue to be great support for me, and I appreciate that very much.

I don't hesitate to recognize Murray Elston and Murray Gaunt as well. They're both from my home community. They lead by example. Murray Gaunt in particular I count as one of my mentors. Murray was very non-partisan. He held court. He represented the riding of Huron for over 15 years, all in a minority situation. He served everyone equally and he gave me my first opportunity to have a TV interview in my ripe old age of 18. He was the one who nominated me for the role of vice-chair with the Ontario 4-H Foundation because he

felt that leadership experience would bid me well in the future. I thank him for that.

I want to share with you as well—it is such an honour to represent Huron–Bruce because Huron–Bruce represents so much. They celebrate beans in Zurich, they celebrate strawberries in Lucknow, pumpkins in Port Elgin, maple syrup in Belmore, the hanging of the green in Mildmay, and they also celebrate Thanksgiving in Belgrave, where 1,000 people sit down at the same time to give thanks.

It's an amazing riding full of community spirit, and that's what I want to bring, as a representative of Huron–Bruce, into this chamber. As representatives of constituents throughout this province, this is a community where I believe we can work together and get some really good things done on behalf of the province.

But before I get into any more details on how I reflect on what we can do better or what we might be able to consider, I need to give thanks to my family, my friends, and members of my community I know and don't know who made this a reality for me.

First of all—I wear my emotion on my sleeve, so get used to that—I thank my husband. He is my best friend, my pillar and number one supporter for this opportunity. I couldn't have done it without you, Dennis.

*Applause.*

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you.

And his family, his children, Vanessa, Devin and Deidra, you've embraced this, you've seen us through it, and we've had a few laughs and some interesting times throughout the way as well. I have to tell you, Deidra was door-knocking with me one day. She came up to the door and she learned what it's like to door-knock. A gentleman said, "Of course, I'm going to do the right thing and vote for Lisa as my representative," so she asked for his phone number, and in all seriousness, he said, "Young lady, I'm married." That was her first real experience of door-knocking, but she learned the wonderful aspect of community in the sense that he was our old postmaster and he was having just a little bit of fun with her. That's how our experience together was kicked off.

1550

My immediate family—Dad, Mom, Dennis, Donna, Lori, Mike, Lana and the kids—I couldn't have done it without you. Your support and your inspiration and source of enthusiasm for this venture were just awesome. I think we did okay.

To Dennis's family, to the Schiestels: Again, I don't consider them my in-laws. They're my family as well. We had a lot of laughs, and they worked so hard. They are just salt-of-the-earth people who, when they believe in something, get behind it 100%, and I thank you for that. You know who you are.

Then I want to talk about community. You know, in my world, I have a variety of homes. I have "out home," where I grew up, near Belgrave. I have "up home," which is in the township of Howick, near McIntosh, where my grandmother lives and where my uncles live as well, actually. And then I have "home," where Dennis and I



reside. When the writ was dropped, it was just—I think that was my “pinch me” moment. There were signs up on the 10th Line of East Wawanosh. There were signs up all around where my parents live. When I turned onto the 6th Line of Culross, that was an awesome sight. From one side of the highway right through to county road 12, there were blue signs for that entire concession. That was pretty awesome, considering that line typically was of a different colour in a different election. I really appreciated the community support that came through.

With that, talking about community and family, I have to recognize my new family as well. My campaign managers, Ken Robertson and Doris Inglis: You were second to none. This campaign ran like clockwork. Your strategy was spot-on. It is all about feet on the street. With the organization that you built around me, we made it happen. Some of that organization also involved your spouses. Luanne and Dave, thank you for sharing Ken and Doris with me. I appreciate it and continue to appreciate it very much.

Because Huron–Bruce is so large, we actually broke our area into hubs, and we had three regional coordinators managing those hubs. Len Wallace: I couldn’t have done it without you. I loved your laugh and your heart behind it. Cassie, thank you for sharing him with me as well. Len and Cassie are from Port Elgin.

We had a dynamo couple in the Wingham area; we had Joan and Bob Middleton. It was just a wonderful experience getting to know you. Your support was awesome, and I appreciate your continued support as well.

In the south end, we had a gentleman whom we ended up calling a magician, because if you ever needed something done, somehow he made it happen. Burk Metzger, you were just awesome in your regional coordinator role in the south end of the riding. Thank you, Simone. I appreciated your support of Burk in this path and this adventure, and I certainly appreciated getting to know you better as well.

I have to share with you that those were just some of the folks that I was most in contact with. Brad Dent, my CFO, is really doing a great job right now, wrapping everything up. I’d like to thank Katie, his wife, for sharing him with me as well.

The important thing here is that I had over 300 people volunteering on my campaign. It was just phenomenal. I hope that I represented you well and continue to do so here at Queen’s Park. I couldn’t have done it without you. You’re my motivation for doing the best job I can.

That’s a little bit about my campaign and the people who helped me along my path to Queen’s Park.

I want to touch a little bit on my career as well, because I grew up on a beef farm. I was involved in 4-H. We did everything in the community that one would expect. It was all about fastball in the summer and hockey in the winter, and snowmobiling as well. But I knew, because I enjoyed my 4-H experience so much, that I would focus my education on a path that would allow me to have a position to apply as a rural com-

munity adviser with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I’m a graduate from the University of Guelph, and my summer jobs, actually, during my whole tenure at Guelph, were with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

One of my first jobs was junior agriculturist coordinator. Interestingly enough, I was 19 years old, and one floor above the minister’s office at 801 Bay Street, when I was interviewing young people from Toronto who wanted an experience on the farm so they could appreciate their food source. So here’s a 19-year-old interviewing 16-year-olds for an opportunity to spend a summer on the farm.

I jumped right in, and those were some great years. Not only did I give people experiences that they maybe would have only dreamt of, but I started building a network that continues to be strong and maintained through to this day, and a lot of mentors have helped me.

When I was working as a summer student, there were two agricultural representatives that I’d like to touch on. Their names are Don Pullen from Huron county and Carm Hamilton from Victoria county, which is now known as Kawartha Lakes. They bestowed in me, from that ripe old age of 19, some extension work values. Extension work, in the historical sense, is all about recognizing a gap or a need, building capacity and then getting out of the way to let that community take over.

When I was working with Carm in the Lindsay area, he asked me one day: “How do you know when you’ve succeeded?” I thought about it and I gave him the best answers that I thought he was wanting to hear. He kept shaking his head, and he said to me finally, “Lisa, you’ll know you’ve succeeded as an extension worker when they don’t need you any longer.” I was taken aback by that, but you know what? It really struck me, because even today, I think modern-day government could learn a thing or two about the old, historic perspective of extension work. We don’t want people to be dependent upon us; we want to be dexterous and deft so we can be responsive to the issues of the day. So we need to focus on identifying a need, building the capacity, and then getting out of the way of innovation and entrepreneurialship so this province can get back to the prosperity that we once knew it had.

That’s my little talk about extension work. It’s near and dear to my heart. It kind of propels me through everything I do to this day.

I worked for OMAFRA in the regions of Halton and Peel. I loved every second of it. One of my favourite aspects of that particular job was coordinating and managing 4-H leadership camps, where young people between the ages of 16 and 21 would define, identify and explore their leadership skills. It’s really interesting because, just today, I met with a provincial agricultural organization, and one of those people that I got to know through my capacity as a rural community adviser was here in a leadership role representing his agricultural organization. That’s what it’s all about. I take great pride in that.



After OMAFRA, I decided, “Hey, slow down long enough that I can think about my family,” and I met Dennis—again. With that said, Dennis is somebody that I have known since I was 15 years of age, and the interesting part is, our worlds evolved away from each other, as I pursued a career and Dennis worked at Westcast Industries in Wingham. As luck should have it, or the stars aligned, we found ourselves together again. So that’s my story with my husband.

One thing that allowed me to move back to Teeswater is that I was consulting with a young organization known as the Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative. It was an organization that was seeking consultation around organizational development. I took on that challenge, and before I knew it, they were asking me if I would consider becoming their general manager. I said, “I grew up on a beef farm. I don’t know anything about goats.” And they said, “Don’t worry; we’ll teach you all you need to know about goats, but you know everything that we need to know about organizational development, and we also would benefit from your network as well.”

Ladies and gentlemen, 10 years later, I’m very proud to say that that co-operative has grown in Teeswater as one of its steadfast employers. There are 15 people on that team, and it’s grown into a multi-million-dollar operation that has economic impacts across the province. That’s what we need to be taking a look at as well as we look to grow Ontario and build a prosperous urban and rural sector.

1600

I should share with you that one of my last mentors I want to touch on is my grandmother. She’s 95 years old. She still lives on the farm in Howick township, near McIntosh, and she’s just the salt of the earth as well. But I have to tell you, when we were talking about the events of the first week, my grandmother even said, “At 95 years old, I can’t see myself really doing a lot of renovations, but I certainly would appreciate relief from my heating bills.” So she’s on the mark there.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** A wise grandmother.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** A wise grandmother.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Very wise, that lady.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Yes, very wise.

The fact of the matter is, I’m just an ordinary person who’s been blessed to have some extraordinary experiences. I became motivated to get involved in provincial politics because I felt that Huron–Bruce needed a clear, credible voice at Queen’s Park, and influence at the table should never be confused with a seat at the table.

These are tough times. Small-town and rural Ontario are tired of being pushed to the margins. We want to be active members on the team known as the prosperous province of Ontario. But I am fully appreciative of the fact that the province is mired in debt and is dependent upon transfer payments, which is a frustration of mine.

This is a time for a new era of leadership so that we have a sustainable economic vision. We need leadership that isn’t canned or contrived, highly partisan or mean-spirited. What I’m talking about is an entrepreneurial

style of leadership; a vision grounded in integrity, relevance, confidence and hope; a new kind of leadership that encourages people to try different things; and one that inspires stakeholders to adopt new approaches for their businesses, communities and their families.

I have to look back at the throne speech from last week and, Speaker, I have to say it was disheartening to listen to it and come to realize that rural Ontario continues to be left in the margins, because the notion of “rural” was not mentioned once. Even more disturbing: Not once during the kick-off of the 40th Parliament of Ontario was Ontario’s largest industry, the agri-food industry, even mentioned. This is not acceptable, and I hope we can make a difference.

Another perfect example of my concern, where rural Ontario is losing its voice, is again what happened last week when the discussion—or the decision—to strip viable jobs and associated economic impacts from rural Ontario was simply justified as “the buildings are too old.” That was it; no other discussion. That’s a concern of mine, because where is the cost-benefit analysis associated with closing the Walkerton, Owen Sound and Sarnia jails? Those people losing their jobs this weekend deserve better, as does rural Ontario and the taxpayers of Ontario.

I suggest to you, Speaker, that a prosperous Ontario requires a strong, healthy urban sector as well as a strong, healthy rural sector, and regarding rural Ontario, we need to embrace rural economic development values and principles that will restore capacity, opportunity and enthusiasm. This means big new ideas; it does not mean bigger, old-style government. The era of big government is over, ladies and gentlemen. Ontario—that means you and me—can no longer afford it. As the economy goes, so go the opportunities for the people in it.

I believe in small towns, I believe in rural Ontario, and I feel that we can work together to bring a strong economic plan during this 40th Parliament. I challenge our colleagues throughout this entire chamber to embrace this notion, because it is about our constituents that we’re representing. We need jobs, we need relief and we need to cut back wasteful spending. Again, I come back to the values that I embraced growing up: It’s about giving back to the community. As politicians representing ridings and communities throughout this wonderful province of Ontario, we can do better.

I’d like to reflect on the fact that my friend the honourable member from Timiskaming–Cochrane even called the government on it last week, reminding the Liberal government that the people have spoken and they no longer have a majority. So we have to be mindful of that and find a way to work better together.

Just to close: Again, Huron–Bruce is an amazing riding. Our main sectors are agriculture and food, tourism, manufacturing and energy. We need all of those sectors to keep our rural community viable. We need all of the jobs we can get, and invite people to get past the knee-jerk reactions and really do a thorough analysis on all the impacts that we decide upon.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments? The member from Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker. I just want to—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** They're all so excited. Isn't that beautiful? Look at that. Aw, that's so cute. Look at that. Beautiful.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** There you go. Beautiful. Isn't that beautiful? I love that.

I just want to congratulate the member. There was such an affectionate display of emotion from the member from Huron–Bruce; it's good to see. Hopefully it will last for a long time. That's a hope that I have for her.

But what we have in common—Liberals, Tories and New Democrats—is the type of experience that the member described in terms of what it takes to win an election and who works for you—family members, friends, children, other folks that you met along the way; these are the people that make a difference for your election. We all have that in common. So in that respect, it's good to articulate it, to express it here so that we all share in the commonality of that experience.

What is also beautiful is how we are different. I'm going to hopefully have the 20 minutes soon to be able to share some of my ideas and some of my differences with my brothers here on the right-hand side.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Come on; you're all the same.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Oh, please. No. You, Minister, are much closer to them than we ever will be. You are so close, you're indistinguishable. Why, when you talk about corporate tax cuts, it's a question of how much closer you are to them than you will ever be to us. But we'll have a chance, Speaker, to get to those—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the Attorney General, if he wants to have cross-dialogue, to please take it outside. Thank you very much.

Questions and comments? The member from Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, sir, and what a delight it is to see you in the chair today. Congratulations on your official appointment. Also, congratulations to the member from Huron–Bruce on her maiden speech. Welcome to this place.

I actually have some connections to the Huron part of your riding; my daughter-in-law is an Exeter girl, so a Huron girl, and in fact my campaign manager is also a Huron—at least, she grew up in Guelph but her family all live in Huron county, so I get to hear lots about Huron county in my family and political travels.

But I did want to point out and maybe take issue a little bit with the impression you left that the Ontario Liberals really haven't been doing anything for rural Ontario, because we brought in, in the budget last year, a risk management program that the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the agriculture journalists in my local newspaper are calling the most significant support for Ontario agriculture in generations.

We had the chicken farmers here today. In fact, we'll all be going off to visit them shortly. Again, they're talking about how staunch our support has been for the supply-managed sector that chicken is part of and the fact that they're looking at how to grow what is a very successful industry between the chicken producers and the chicken processors—a real success story.

1610

One of the things I got to do just recently was a local food announcement with the Ontario goat and veal producers to help market foods for local goat producers—so, something in your industry there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments? The member for—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a former Liberal riding.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Would it be South Glengarry—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Thanks. Sorry.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'd like to also congratulate the Speaker on your role—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** From Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Ideologically we may be on different sides—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I've been informed that the member is not in his seat.

**Interjection:** How could that be, Paul?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** That's why I probably got it wrong.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's right. I knew it wasn't your fault, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** You confused the Speaker. You have to speak from your seat, member.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I will continue. I congratulate you on your new post.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** As I say, ideologically I know we're on different sides, but I can see your co-operation. I think it's appreciated by three sides.

I'd like to congratulate my colleague from Huron–Bruce. I think it was a great maiden speech, and she made us feel very much aware of her riding. I had the privilege, on a summer job, to work at the Bruce nuclear plant. I'm somewhat familiar with the riding and the great people from there. The people must be commended for making such a wise choice of a member.

A rural background is something I share. Rural people tend to come through harder times and know the importance of paying their way, and I can see that my colleague was truly brought up that way. I think it's important in Ontario to get back to the principle of making sure we can live within our means, and if we don't start living within our means, we will soon not be able to

afford the necessities that we've seen to be important in this province.

I know that I can look forward to great things from my colleague. The people of Huron–Bruce have chosen wisely, and the people of Ontario will be the benefactors.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to extend my congratulations on your appointment as Speaker. The seat suits you well.

I'd particularly like to extend my congratulations to the member from Huron–Bruce. I'd like to congratulate her on her victory, and I particularly would like to draw attention to the fact that my colleague acknowledged those who have put her here. She took the time to acknowledge the volunteers, friends and family. I think we should all remember who sent us where we are and, in all things we do, always remember that it's for them: the constituents, the volunteers, the people who worked for us. That's whom we're the voice of, and that's whom we're here to represent. We should always keep that in our minds.

I'd like to extend my congratulations once again and also my appreciation of the fact that my colleague has the humility to acknowledge that by ourselves we are nothing and that with support, with our family, with our volunteers—that's the only reason we're here today.

In addition, I'd like to say that when it comes to the issues that affect Ontario, it's also important to recognize that when times are difficult, when times are hard in an economic downturn, it's in those times that it's most important to take care of those most vulnerable. It's in these times that we must recognize that the most vulnerable need the most support and the most protection. Thank you so much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Huron–Bruce has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** First, I want to thank my colleagues in the chamber for their comments. I appreciate them very much.

As I said before, I wear my heart on my sleeve, and I work very hard as well. What you see is what you get.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** How about Carol? Talk about Carol.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm being asked about the former member. I can honestly say I have never, ever heard from her to this date.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to address the comment made by the honourable member from Guelph. While I truly appreciate the ag policy that has been introduced just this past year, I feel it's very important to underline the fact that good agriculture policy does not translate into thorough rural economic development policy. We need to have policies that embrace both opportunities for the agri-food industry as well as a vision and a strategy to keep our Main Streets open. I don't want Huron–Bruce to be known as a riding that has boarded-up Main Streets when people are passing through to go to their cottages along Ontario's west coast. That's not what I want, and I

know my constituents don't want that either. Again, I repeat myself: We need a thorough plan to sustain rural economic development, of which ag policy is a part.

We also need to keep mindful of the fact that we need a vision and we need a commitment from the Ontario government to sustain a viable rural Ontario. We need to have transparency so that when communities are losing their one and only school, they can have good conversations with their board of education so that they can understand the economic impacts of why the school is being closed, because, honest to Pete, once a rural school closes, that is an economic driver and we'll lose our support in our towns.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member for Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to say we have an absolutely brilliant leader in Andrea Horwath, but it was a stroke of genius—

*Applause.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Yes, absolutely, but it was a stroke of sheer genius that put you in the chair, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that you are doing a superlative job and that we're very pleased to have you there.

I also want to take just a few minutes to follow the member from Huron–Bruce, because I didn't get a chance to do a two-minute hit on her comments. I was a minister in Huron–Bruce for two years. It was my settlement charge. I have to say the people there are phenomenal and it truly is the west coast of Ontario. So congratulations and welcome to the House. You represent an amazing riding and some amazing people. Say hi to them.

Now to the meat of the matter, Mr. Speaker. Of course, it's a joy and a privilege to be here speaking again on behalf of the people of Parkdale–High Park and, I have to say—and of course I'm biased—the most beautiful riding in all of Ontario, just there: High Park, really. They sent me here to do a job and they sent me here with a message. I can tell you that most of the people of Parkdale–High Park represent that 99% that we've been hearing about in the news. You've been hearing about it because of the Occupy movement. But what I'm looking at in this chamber, Mr. Speaker, is a government that represents the 1%. They do it incredibly effectively, but that's what they do.

So as someone representing the 99%, let's start off where it counts. Let's start off with an incredibly shocking fact, and that is that, really, the one who is dictating the economic policy for this government isn't even in this chamber. He's not even in this chamber. The 108th member, if you will, of this chamber, unelected, is a gentleman who comes from a banking background, a gentleman to whom we are paying \$1,500 a day to inform this government about what it should be doing.

Now, the good people in Parkdale–High Park have many good friends. It's coming up to the holiday season. We think about who we love, our good friends to whom we're going to give. I can tell you not one of them is



thinking of their banker this season, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell you why: because most of them are in debt up to their eyeballs, as are most Canadians. Who do they owe that money to? Banks. They owe that money to banks, and if the interest rates bump up even a percentage point, we have people in my riding who will not be able to pay the rent and feed their children or pay their mortgages; we have seniors who, despite the much-touted tax credit, which I'll get to in a few minutes, will not be able to pay their way in their homes.

1620

Those are bankers. He's a banker. This is like asking the fox how to build a cost-efficient henhouse. One would question the fox's motives. One would question even the structure of the design, because foxes and hens don't have the same view of the world. A banker who's earning \$1,500 a day does not have the same view of the economic world as a mother on social assistance who is trying to raise her children. He does not have the same point of view as a small business person who represents 90% of the new jobs created. Small business, Mr. Speaker—not big business, not banks, not their major corporate customers, not the government's major corporate sponsors—creates 90% of the jobs in Ontario.

No, he doesn't speak for small business. I'm talking to small business people all the time in my riding. They're hanging on by their fingernails. One told me, off the record—a leader among small business owners—that there isn't one small business anywhere in the GTA that's not for sale if the price is right, and the price is anything that pays their rent—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The minister is not listening to the end of the sentence. The ministers aren't—Mr. Speaker, how can we conduct business when they don't listen?

So, what he said at the end of the sentence is this—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the Attorney General to cease and desist from his behaviour.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** What he said is that the price would be right if it paid the rent and it paid for their principal costs alone—no profit whatsoever. That's the state of small business.

It's funny that this government didn't consult small business. They're not being paid \$1,500 a day, Mr. Speaker. They didn't consult the woman on welfare when they wanted to look at economic answers. She could use the \$1,500 a day. They didn't talk to people like contract faculty who aren't getting paid at our community colleges. I see the colleges are coming to lobby us this week. I've got something to tell them: They didn't pay them \$1,500 a day to give them some economic advice. So the question really is, whose economy is it?

Very clearly, when you hire a banker to tell you how to run an economy, chances are it's going to be an economy that's favourable to banks. Call me crazy. Now, if they had checked with someone else, you might get a little different answer about who this economy is sup-

posed to work for. You might have gotten a slightly different answer.

You know, we just came through a period where 1,500 cities around the world saw hundreds of thousands of people gather in their main squares, streets and parks, and the one thing they all had in common was that they were tired of the 99% paying for the 1%. They all thought—and, by the way, they're not alone; even Warren Buffett and Bill Clinton agree with them—that the 1% might actually be able to pay a little bit more. But that's not this government's response. That's not their response. In fact, \$600 million in the last couple of years has gone right to corporations. We're looking at, by the way, billions more going to corporations. For what? For boxes at SkyDome—Rogers Centre, excuse me—for luxuries like taking clients out to lunches.

Now, if I go back to the woman on welfare, if I talk to contract faculty workers, if I talk to the small business owner and I tell them that some of the wealthiest bankers, insurance companies, large corporations, which, by the way, are major funders of the party opposite—he who pays the piper, Mr. Speaker. If I told them that there are yet more breaks going their way, and the small business owner said, “But all I wanted was an extra 0.5% off my taxes,” or the woman on social assistance or the woman trying to make ends meet on minimum wage—just the minimum wage that would get her to the poverty level. Then you ask them to pay even more taxes, a regressive flat tax like the HST that's going to hit the poorest the worst. Then you say, “But, you know, we need your taxes so we can keep supporting the Don Drummonds of the world, because \$1,500 a day has got to come from somewhere.” It's got to come from somewhere. It's going to come from HST off essentials for the seniors. It's going to come from HST off the essentials for those just making ends meet. That's where it's coming from.

The largest shift in Ontario's history from the wealthy to the middle class and the poor is the HST; the largest shift ever in our history. And you know what? We have the highest rate of poverty ever since the 1930s, too. You know, maybe there's a correlation between some of the policies on the other side of the aisle, with the Don Drummonds and the large corporations and the fact that the middle class is emptying out.

You know, I always tell a story when I'm speaking to constituents or any group about the economy. I always say, I grew up in Toronto, a Torontonians born and bred. I've lived here all my life except for a couple of years in Ontario, and quite frankly, my family in those days—and I'm old, Mr. Speaker; I'm getting older by the minute in this place. In my day, on one salary you could own a home in downtown Toronto and a car in the driveway and pay it off, and the lucky among you—and many were that lucky—could have a cottage, too, on one salary.

Now, our children's generation, on two salaries—two salaries—if they're lucky, in downtown Toronto maybe they can scrape together enough to get a condo. They'll never, probably, own it—on two salaries. And certainly, only the Don Drummonds of the world can afford a



cottage. My goodness, you have to be wealthy to afford two homes in Ontario now. That's in one lifetime. That's how far we've fallen. That's how far behind the eight ball we are in this province, and that's on our children's shoulders. Imagine what it will be like for our grandchildren if this trend continues.

In that Occupy movement another theme that kept coming up again and again was the fact that not only is education profoundly expensive now, but that even with a BA, even with an MA, even sometimes with a doctorate, you can't get a job in your field. So here we are in Ontario with the highest tuition fees in Canada, the highest student debt in Canada—we should be ashamed of that—and you can't find a job once you get that degree. Well, you could find a job, maybe, but it's a McJob.

This is a government that brags about the jobs they've created. It's nothing I'd brag about in the province of Ontario, because we know the jobs they created. We know the jobs they lost: a quarter of a million or so. Those are good, highly paid manufacturing jobs. We know the jobs that have been replacing those jobs, and they're contract, temporary, part-time; many, minimum wage. That's nothing to brag about.

This is a time of crisis in our province. It's a crisis on every front, the economy being, of course, where we focus most. A crisis in jobs, a crisis in the economy, a crisis for the 99%. Most people are living paycheque to paycheque. Most people are one salary away from losing their home or their apartment, if they're renters. That's the reality of our province, and the jobs are being sent south, they're being sent overseas. They're not being kept here. We're losing our manufacturing base. This is the reality.

What we need is political will. We need a government that has political will or—hey, the voters sent us back with a mandate. They sent us back with a mandate this time. They said no to a Liberal majority. That's what they said, by the way. They said no to a Liberal majority. They said yes to co-operation, negotiation, working together to actually make life easier for the average person. That was the mandate we were all sent here with, each in our own way. We don't want a one-party state; none of us do, please, I hope. Come on. We were sent here with different political perspectives to work together, to bring those ideologies together around the table to try to figure out where we could agree to make life easier for the average family—not for Don Drummond, but to make life easier for the average family. That was the mandate the good, solid, hard-working people of Parkdale–High Park sent me to do. That's the mandate they sent me here with.

1630

They said, "We're sick of the partisan bickering. We're sick of the brinksmanship and the one-upmanship." What they said was, "Get together. Come together and work, just once, for the 99%"—not for the 1%, but for the 99%. That's what they sent me here with, Mr. Speaker. They sent me here with a mandate—the one

thing we all agree on, in my riding—to make life more affordable for the average person, to make life more affordable for the small business person, to make life more affordable for the woman making minimum wage or on social assistance, to make life more affordable for the senior, to make life more affordable for the contract teacher, to make life more affordable for the vast majority of Ontarians.

Not once in the entire campaign did somebody say, "I want to make life a little richer for my banker." Not once did I hear that, nor did I hear, "I would love to take economic advice about my life from a wealthy banker"—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You did?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Not once.

Not once did they say, "The person I think who really has a handle on the economy is a senior banker who will be paid \$1,500 a day for his advice." Not once did I hear anything remotely like that. What I heard was, "Please, please say to everyone there, 'Get together and speak for the 99%. Get together and speak for me and, quite frankly, even those who work in banks, not those who head banks; those who work in hospitals, not those who head hospitals; and those who work in home care,'" like you heard so eloquently from our new member and from our health critic.

We are standing here for them. They are the ones who elected us. They truly do wonder at why, all of a sudden, someone who was never elected, someone who never had a vote cast for him in his life that I'm aware of, is now dictating economic policy to our friends across the aisle. They wonder at that, and they also wonder why a government faced with a \$16-billion deficit, not to mention a true debt of a third of a trillion dollars, is paying said someone who was never elected \$1,500 a day to give them advice.

Again, I come back to this: Not once did I hear from any of my folk, who are thinking about the holiday season and gift-giving, that anybody was going to give a gift to their banker. Not once did I hear from my folk that the person who they really, really turn to—a person they run from is their banker, not turn to. They run from their banker—you know, the one who holds that little plastic usury—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** In Biblical times, it was considered a sin, usury, those interest-rate-bearing cards.

Not once did they say, "I'm going to send a gift to the guy who owns my MasterCard or my Visa," because most Ontarians are up to here with debt, and they would like to run from the bearer of that debt. That's what they'd like to run from. Yet here we come to this lovely place—it's a charming place, it's a beautiful place. And here—hah—the person they're running from is the person advising the government on economic policy.

We will do our best in the New Democratic Party to represent those who sent us here, the 99% who sent us here, who actually would like to see some collective political will to make their life a little easier. That's all they ask. They didn't ask much. "Make my life a little



easier. Do something for me”—that’s what they asked us. They asked each one of us, and each one of us is going to have to return to our riding to face those same people—maybe sooner, maybe later, we don’t know—and they’re going to say, “What did you do for me?” Quite frankly, I know that we in the New Democratic Party are committed to saying, “This is what we tried to do and this is what we tried to do and this is what we tried to do.” I’m sending a wish, a Christmas wish, over to my friends across the aisle. I’m hoping that, with their assistance and their help, we can go back and say, “This is what we accomplished for you, this is what we did for you,” not just for the Don Drummonds, not just for the bankers, but for everyone.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments? The member from York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** You’re right, Speaker. Thank you very much. You’re a quick study.

In response to the member from Parkdale–High Park, we are debating the speech from the throne, which is a guide of what the government intends to do in the next year or so.

I think we all have to be very much aware, Speaker—some of us, by the way, in this 40th Parliament are in a position others were in during a majority. But I think this is a very special time for all the members in the House, Speaker, at this particular time—how things will evolve in a minority government, if you will.

I concur with the member that, yes, we should be doing a number of things. But if we are to call on every member of the House, not only in representing our own constituency, but this is a time when we have to all work together on behalf of all the people of Ontario. Because whatever we decide not only affects the people in Parkdale or in York West, it affects the entire province of Ontario. More than ever, it’s important that we deal with the issues at hand: health care, education, long-term care, nursing, daycare—all wonderful things.

But you know, Speaker, one thing that we very seldom say in this House is that we have one taxpayer. I love my seniors. I love giving more to the people working in hospitals, in nursing homes and the assembly lines. Of course there’s no member that doesn’t want to do that. But the reality is this: Where are we getting the money from to give it to someone else? I think this is where we have to come together.

I hope in the days and months ahead we can all work together on those very issues, Speaker. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated our member from Parkdale–High Park’s passion and her commitment to her constituents, because I too see where she can wear her heart on her sleeve as well. I particularly appreciated how she astutely pointed out the follies of the government source of economic consultations as opposed to listening to the folks in Ontario that really matter. I congratulate her for pointing that out because I agree with her.

We need to make life more affordable in Ontario for the average family. We need to get rid of government waste, we need to create more jobs and we have to make life easier, in the sense that folks are paying too much. They’re beyond their means.

I come back and revisit the conversation that I had with my grandmother, Laurine Wright. At 95 years of age, she wants to see realistic policies. At 95 years of age, she has no intention of renovating her home, but she would like relief on home heating bills. So well done on that.

1640

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** She might need a ramp.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** She doesn’t. You don’t know my grandmother, so don’t comment unless you know her.

But with that said, I have to say that the member for Parkdale–High Park is spot-on when she’s calling out our government for not listening. And again, it was her colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane that pointed out to the government that they no longer have the majority government, so it would behoove them to start listening.

I also would like to extend an invitation to our colleague beside the member from Parkdale–High Park to certainly come and visit Huron–Bruce. Again, I will indeed share your warm greetings with the good people from Kippen on your behalf. Good job.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I want to say this: I agree with the member from Parkdale–High Park 99% of the time on her speeches that she gives in this Legislature, and on this one, 100%.

I also want to respond to the member from York West, briefly.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I thought you would have said 99%.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Well, there’s always a little difference. Not much.

But I want to respond to the Attorney General and the member from York West as well, because they both say that we’ve got to work together. But it’s a funny thing, because when we say we’ve got to work together, they disagree with us.

But here’s the problemo: Tories and New Democrats—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the member—not any cross-dialogue—to go through the Speaker. Thank you.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Always through the Speaker. Remember, through the Speaker, even if you don’t look at him.

The point is this: We passed a bill just the other day, Tories and New Democrats, and remember, the population supported these two parties and we have greater numbers than you.

It was a profound mistake, I’ve got to tell you, that the Liberals made, not to listen to the other side. See, if I

were the Premier, I would have said, "The Tories and New Democrats agree on this particular measure, and that is that they should take the HST out of heating costs, and we are going to listen to the will of the majority of people who elected those two parties." Instead, he and all of you chose not to listen.

It's a serious problem, because when you say we've got to work together but two parties made a serious effort at working together on one issue and you all decided to oppose it, you've got a little problem of credibility. You've got to remember that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to offer a couple of minutes on the remarks by the member from Parkdale-High Park.

I'll begin, I think, by talking a bit—she referenced, as has the member who just sat down, the private member's bill last week in the Legislature that passed this House, and the member from Huron-Bruce was referencing that as well.

If memory serves me, the member who introduced the legislation quoted the relief to be about \$100 annually, and so I think it's important for us, if we're going to talk about that, to put on the record that I guess that comes out to about 25 or 30 cents a day of relief for people in the province of Ontario should that have passed, because, as usually is discussed in this place when we talk about this issue, they talk about the HST but they don't talk about the fact that the provincial portion is not the full HST. It's not the full 13%; it's less than that. That's the part that we have some impact on. So I think it's important just to remind people that that comes out, according to the math used by the member of the third party in his legislation, to about 25 or 30 cents a day. I mean, it's not that it's unimportant. It's just that I think it provides some context for the discussion.

The other thing I'd like to say is that the member originally spoke, again, about the debt and the situation that we find ourselves in in the province of Ontario. I spoke a bit about that in my 20 minutes earlier this afternoon, but what we never hear coming from the opposition is some of the projects that occurred in their ridings that they would have preferred we not go forward with.

In my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan, we've got a whole bunch of things that went forward that did probably contribute to the debt but that I wasn't going to fight against, I'll tell you that—one of them being Bombardier. There are 800 more people working at Bombardier today than there were in 2003—the total is about 1,200 now—about 800, many of that directly related to investments we made as a government.

I'm not going to fight against those. One of those was a \$1.2-billion contract for subway cars here in the city of Toronto, very good for the city of Toronto, voted against by some of the Toronto members.

Those are projects I'm not going to vote against. I'm going to advocate for my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Parkdale-High Park has two minutes.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you to all the members for their contributions and their responses.

Listen, I live in hope; I really do. I live in hope and approach this minority government situation with great hope and expectations. I hope that we do work together. I hope that my friends across the aisle do come around the table and see that, again, when the majority of Ontarians have in fact given us the majority of the House, that means something and our opinion counts for something.

We're at the very beginning of a session, and I look forward to some initiatives from this side of the House coming into law, because that's what we're here for, and that's completely possible in a minority government. I'm looking forward to working with them to strengthen their bills, to bring things to their bills by way of amendments that perhaps they didn't think of. Again, in a minority government, that's completely possible.

The good voters of Ontario sent us all here and said, "Please negotiate. Please sit around a common table with a common aim—that is, our welfare—and please come to some common aims and actually see them put into law." That's what we're all here for, Mr. Speaker—all of us—and we all have something to contribute.

The truth does not lie anywhere here; it lies in our cumulative effort, hence the owl and the eagle in this House. Keep the government to account. That's what we're charged with, here in the opposition. And the government is charged with listening to the opposition to keep them to account. That's all the voters ask for. I think that if we did that, people would vote more frequently. People don't vote because they don't see that.

So I live in hope. It is the season. Let's all get along. Let's have some peace. Let's get some work done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'll be sharing my time with the member from Mississauga-Streetsville.

As I listened to the speech from the throne last week, I was reminded of the many achievements of the Liberal government over the last eight years.

One of the things that I really have to think about is that probably in the last five years, because of early intervention in our high schools and because of giving credit to young kids who have strengths different than academic strengths, we probably have 60,000 to 70,000 more youth who have graduated from high schools than would have happened under the old system. This was part of the education plan to give these young people this opportunity, to get them through high school and into trades and jobs, and to really be positive. That 60,000 is a small city of people who would not have had that opportunity under the old system.

Another thing that's very important to me is the 55,000 more children this year who will be going into full-day kindergarten—extremely important.

I have three grandchildren. Logan is five, Keegan is three and Macey is six months old. Logan is now in his



second year of full-day kindergarten at Arc-en-ciel school in Orléans.

It's just amazing: His parents speak a bit of French, but he went into a full French school, and you know what? He already speaks French in less than a year and a half. He loves his school. He's an advertisement for full-day kindergarten. Imagine: He's well on his way to being fully bilingual. He loves his school, and it's tremendous training they get, all that fourth and fifth year. He's certainly going to be ready for grade 1 next year.

One of the things in today's paper, the *Toronto Star*, November 28: "Study puts Ontario students on top: Grade 8 scores above the national average.

"Ontario's grade 8 students are outperforming their peers across the country in math, science and reading, according to a nationwide study.

"Results from the 2010 Pan-Canadian Assessment Program test show Ontario is the only province whose students were above the national average in all three subjects."

1650

That's wonderful—and that's on top of the findings of the international body that has named Ontario one of the world's best-performing school systems: "The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which has been tracking education attainment in 32 countries across the globe since 2000, placed the province high on its ranking of successful school systems." I think that's just wonderful news about our school system.

Some seniors may not be able to take advantage of the home renovation tax credit, but that's going to be a great tax credit to get more seniors—certainly, I'm thinking of improvements I can make in my home right now. It will create 10,500 jobs and \$800 million in home renovation activity, and it will help seniors stay in their homes longer and benefit taxpayers by relieving pressures of long-term-care home costs. We all know that the long-term-home-care home costs and the costs in hospitals are just atrocious, and if you talk to the seniors—this was said already today—they want to stay in their homes as long as possible. That's where they're used to living; that's where they want to live. This will be another thing that will be helping them in addition to our aging at home strategy, which is going forward.

One of the things that I've been speaking of and working towards in the last eight years is a greener province. We certainly have achieved that. We're going to be out of coal—one of the reasons I'm really, really pleased that I got re-elected again—I think it was great news that night—was my passion to create a better understanding of the environment and the effects of our actions on it. There's a new report by the International Energy Agency just out, and the IEA says that the trends of energy use and the failure to begin reducing greenhouse-gas emissions worldwide has put the planet on a trajectory to a "long-term global temperature increase of more than 3.5 degrees Celsius." This is why it's so sad: 2 degrees Celsius was looked at as something that maybe, with adaptation, we could do something about,

but we've gone much beyond that now with our CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. It's much beyond the 2 degrees. We should be going back towards that.

The reason I'm speaking about it today: The throne speech is what I am to be speaking about, but I think it's very important that we have the United Nations meeting in Durban, South Africa, to try to work out a new deal. Of course, true to our federal government's stance—and this is Jeffrey Simpson, and I think he writes in the *Globe*. What does he say here? "Renewables such as wind and solar will make small gains in the total energy mix. They need large subsidies, and critics have a field day assailing those subsidies. What critics forget, but the IEA reminds us, is that fossil fuels around the world are estimated to receive subsidies of \$400 billion a year."

That's true. Our federal government is giving the tar sands project approximately \$1 billion to capture, transport and store the CO<sub>2</sub>. Well, everybody knows that that doesn't work, and they're going to find out that on a macro scale, it does not work. Because subsidies are given to coal and to oil, they should be there for wind and for solar as well.

"Moreover, the pollution from burning fossil fuels is not captured in their pricing, which constitutes another kind of hidden, huge subsidy. Include the price of pollution in the retail price of fossil fuel energy, and the playing field with other energy sources would be made somewhat more even."

Jeffrey Simpson does great articles on climate change. He understands it; he has written a book on it. I think he's right on here. If we look at all the hidden subsidies that the fossil fuels get compared to what we're giving to solar and wind, we'd be on a much easier footing.

"Expect More Climate Upheaval, Panel Warns Nations"—this is another article; this is the *Ottawa Citizen*, November 19. Climate change, we know it's coming. We know the weather is really getting—here we have Kent. I understand Kent is in Durban, running the climate change policy for Canada. He's the Minister of the Environment. "I'd be delighted if I came back with fewer fossil awards than John Baird or Jim Prentice"—that's his challenge, to come back with fewer fossil awards—"Kent said, referring to previous Conservative environment ministers who were ... presented with the awards, and even won the Colossal Fossil of the Year award at least twice. 'We're going in good faith, not to obstruct.'" Well, I wonder.

"However, Canada wants no part of a second Kyoto ... Kent said," adding Canada is in good company with Japan, Russia and the US. The Durban talks start today. They'll go on for two weeks, and Canada, as usual, will be trying to block any movement towards mitigating climate change.

This has always been one of my larger interests here in Toronto. I do a lot with the schools as well. It is important to get that information out to the kids because, as adults, we have not been able to deal with it. What they want to come out of Durban with today is that there be nothing done for 20 years, which takes us past the 3.5-



degree warming stage. This is what world scientists say. This is 99% of world scientists and the international group that monitors it. Can't they understand that we're taking the wrong attitude in Canada? Thank goodness we got out of coal. We'll be out of coal completely.

But just look: We reduced our greenhouse gases by about 26 megatonnes per year. And you know what? The problem is that in 2007, the tar sands produced 40 megatonnes of greenhouse gases, so any reduction in Ontario is more than offset by the greenhouse gases in the tar sands. In 2020, it's estimated that the tar sands will produce more greenhouse gases than Belgium, which is a nation of 10 million people. They put out 131 megatonnes per year; the tar sands will put out 140 megatonnes in 2020.

So this is something that I am passionate about, that I work with. I will be coming forward with a private member's bill in the same light.

I'm glad to give up my time to the member for Mississauga—Streetsville. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand here and to comment on the speech from the throne, and I'd like to do this from the perspective of the city of Mississauga, which is much more than Ontario's third-largest municipality. Our city is home to more people than the city of Vancouver, something that I state because that was the city I lived in before I moved to Mississauga. In fact, each day some 50,000 more people commute into Mississauga to work than commute out of Mississauga to work. To go back to the city of Vancouver, our city of Mississauga is home to more jobs than the city of Vancouver.

And while I'm on the city of Vancouver, I also have to say: Way to go, Lions, Grey Cup champs for 2011!

Now, Speaker, we're a dynamic, growing, diverse, hard-working and cutting-edge city in Mississauga. Our people look to their government as partners in getting settled, getting educated and trained, getting ahead and sharing our skills and our prosperity. That's why our city can look ahead with growing confidence at the speech from the throne of this, Ontario's 40th Parliament, and urge all other members to implement its ambitious measures.

Mississauga residents voted Liberal in October. That's because Mississauga residents have learned that our government respects and works with our city and with our overlapping federal members, and Mississauga residents know that the people they send to Ottawa, to Queen's Park and to city hall all understand that it's still the same taxpayer. Mississauga residents have seen that when their MPPs make a promise to them, we keep our word, and we'll do what we say that we're going to do.

Since 2003, when the residents of Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville first elected me as their representative in the Ontario Legislature, western Mississauga has seen the kind of change that our communities need to grow, to prosper, to innovate, to learn, to build a home and to raise a family.

1700

In 2003, I teamed up with Mississauga Ward 9 Councillor Pat Saito on our need for a new GO train station in the fast-growing community of Lisgar. Councillor Saito had worked for 12 years to serve northwest Mississauga through successive NDP and Conservative governments. They hadn't listened, and we didn't have that station. Working together with GO Transit, with the city and with our government, we got that project announced, not in 12 years but in 15 months. Then GO Transit and our government worked with Lisgar residents and with the city to get the project completed ahead of schedule and under budget. Today, I take the train from Lisgar to Queen's Park myself from time to time—promise made, promise kept.

In our western Mississauga neighbourhoods, some 15,000 people move in each and every year—15,000 people. We need our health care. We need it to be up to date. We need it to be working. Nine years ago it wasn't up to date. Our Credit Valley Hospital still operated, nine years ago, the 365 beds it was built with when Mississauga's population was half of what it was in 2003. We needed to expand our maternity suite. We were delivering some 5,500 babies in a facility designed for half that number of deliveries each year.

We got that funding for phase 2 of Credit Valley Hospital in 2005. We got the construction started ahead of schedule. Credit Valley Hospital delivered the redevelopment of the A and H blocks, ahead of schedule and under budget this year—a promise made and a promise kept.

Along the way, we brought in three new linear accelerators for cancer treatment ahead of schedule. Our hospital budget has grown to meet our community's needs. We have more doctors and nurses. We're building a new medical academy at the University of Toronto at Mississauga. We have a family health team. That's over and above the commitments our government and our MPPs have made and kept.

Our community is the beneficiary of the skills, the work ethic, the resources, and the entrepreneurial drive of men and women educated at the expense of the taxpayer of countless other countries. These Canadians residing in Ontario needed then, and still need today, measures to help them restart their careers, create jobs, and build wealth. They needed measures in 2003 that were timely, cost-effective, fair and transparent. Our residents got that help in 2006 with the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act—a promise made and a promise kept.

That's also a large part of why, this summer and this fall, our campaign workers in western Mississauga spoke nearly two dozen languages. They were and are Canadians and proud Ontarians, residents who are building our community and creating jobs here in Ontario. One thing they aren't: They're not foreign workers.

Ontario is keeping its promise and ours in three other important ways: funding for Credit Valley Hospital's phase 3 to expand urgent care and to add an ambulatory surgery centre; a new major redevelopment of



ErinoakKids, which is the largest children's treatment centre in Ontario; and funding for new facilities in Mississauga, in Brampton and in Oakville, announced in May of this year. We need that major expansion of Ontario's largest children's treatment centre. We need it on time, and we'll deliver it on budget.

Finally, part of our government mandate is to implement all-day, two-way GO train service: promises made and promises that will be kept, all of them.

Mississauga is one of the world's pre-eminent places where the world comes to innovate. Let's take a look at a few examples. Baylis Medical, quickly becoming a gold standard for physicians around the world as it provides safe and predictable left atrium heart access—they've marketed their products in more than 60 countries. Where is their home? The city of Mississauga.

UCIT Online Security provides wireless cameras that record around the clock and can be controlled over the Internet, making it possible to use them anywhere in the world.

Temporal Power is a company based in Mississauga. It develops electrical energy storage systems for highly demanding applications, and what this means is that, with their flywheel energy storage system, they're able to hold 50 times as much energy as most commercial systems currently available on the market.

This is the kind of innovation that we need in the city of Mississauga. This is the climate and the spirit that this speech from the throne is building—not merely in our city of 800,000 hard-working people, not merely in our communities of Lisgar, Meadowvale, Streetsville and in neighbourhoods like Erindale, Cooksville, Dixie, Clarkson and Port Credit; this is what we're building in the entire province of Ontario. We're building a culture and an entrepreneurial system here that will enable Ontario to build on its strengths.

We don't look at this province as being a loser like some of the others in this House have said all through the election. We believe in Ontario. We believe in our province. We believe in its people. And in Mississauga, we believe in our hard-working citizens. We know that with the right tools, we can empower them to be everything that they came to Canada, came to Ontario and came to Mississauga to be. That's what this speech from the throne is all about. That's the kind of Ontario that this speech from the throne aims to build. And that's the kind of society that Ontarians said loudly and clearly on October 6 that they wanted to have in their province.

They don't want an attitude that says this province stinks. They want people who are going to advocate for the 13 million people in our family of Ontario. That's where this speech from the throne is going, and that's why the 800,000 citizens in the city of Mississauga look upon Ontario's 2011 speech from the throne as their gateway to a prosperous and a rewarding future. That, Speaker, is why I'm going support this 2011 speech from the throne.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** We'll get this right this time: Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hold education near and dear to my heart, as I mentioned earlier today. We have a great system in Ontario. We can educate as many people as we can and get them graduated, but the problem is, there are no jobs for them when they graduate from university or college. Let's work on fixing the system in Ontario and bringing jobs back to Ontario. Let's fix the apprenticeship ratio so that we can create more trade jobs, so that we can create more jobs for the riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London.

And it would be nice with this seniors' tax credit if, in fact, seniors had the money to pay for it, but right now they're struggling to pay the bills. Why not support the removal of the HST from our heating bills so that we can affect all Ontarians, so they all have a break, so they all have more money, so they can get our local economy stimulated.

And I'm a true believer of fixing this environment and global warming, so why won't the Liberals follow through on their 2007 promise and close the coal plants? Let's start working here. Let's quit blaming the federal government for our—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I had a good hot dog for lunch. I'm just—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Order.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Let's get global warming—let's look at our own problems. Quit blaming the federal government. Let's close those coal plants.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Order.

Once again, I'd like to reiterate my wishes that there be less talk across the aisle. Let the member make his statement. I don't want to have to name anyone.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now I've lost my spot, but I will continue.

**Interjection:** Start over again.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'll start from the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like, hopefully in a year from now, to congratulate the Toronto Argonauts, who are hosting the Grey Cup next year, that we have the Grey Cup home in Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further comment?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I was listening to the throne speech and am pleased to hear that the government is listening to good ideas. I was happy to hear the member from Mississauga–Streetsville mention transit, but I didn't hear any mention of public transit in the throne speech.

Today is a big day in our city of Toronto. It is budget day, and we have more bad news here. We are losing transit in our city—10% across-the-board cuts in our city. This is not efficient use of space or energy. We're going to be taking buses and streetcars off the road because we won't pay the operating costs.

So I do have a good idea for the government: Why don't we fund operations for public transit in this city? We used to do this back in the day, before—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The NDP used to do it.



1710

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** The NDP used to do it, before the Conservatives cut the funding. That funding has never returned, and we still are paying the price today.

In addition to lost routes, regular folks are paying more for their transit starting January 1. On top of that, it was announced that we're also getting a property tax increase. This is chronic neglect from the Ontario government: not funding our cities, not supporting people here and not standing up for public transit. We know that this makes good sense, to fund public transit. It works for the environment. It's an equity issue. It means that everybody in this city has access to the city. But it's inequitable when people can't afford to get on a bus or when they have to wait in line for a bus, and when it does show up, it's too crowded.

Mr. Speaker, I do hope that the government will listen to this good idea, that everybody will agree with this. Across this city and in municipalities across Ontario, we need public transit. We need to pay for the costs of operating it, and we need it now. People across this city are extremely upset about what's happening here, and the Ontario government does have a role to play to reverse this. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to congratulate the members from Mississauga–Streetsville and Ottawa–Orléans for their comments.

I want to focus, if I can in my couple of minutes, on the comments primarily from the member from Ottawa–Orléans, who, for the past eight, going on nine, years now, has spent a great deal of his time advocating on issues that he spoke to, that being a green economy, reductions in greenhouse gases, carbon emissions and the like. He spent a great deal of time on that. What it makes me remember is that in 1995, the Harris government very proudly committed to no longer being in the mass transit game. So the theme that's coming out here this afternoon, they very publicly—that's their position. You can defend it. I'm not here to criticize it; I'm just saying they did it. In 1995 they said, "We're not doing that." In the 2003 provincial election, as part of an environmental policy in the province of Ontario, we very publicly and very clearly committed to enhancing mass transit in the province of Ontario to get people out of their cars and into mass transit.

The member who just spoke: Boy, I wish I had the numbers in front of me. If I could capture the total commitment that this Liberal government has made to mass transit primarily to the benefit of Toronto, it is really quite remarkable.

Another piece that was just committed to in the recent election was, of course, our commitment for all-day—is it all-day two-way GO Transit service between—

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thirty minutes, Toronto to Hamilton.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thirty minutes, Toronto to Hamilton. The reason that that resonated with me, as a member

from Thunder Bay–Atikokan having the Bombardier plant, as I just said earlier: 800 more jobs; they are now up to 1,200 total. This commitment to two-way all-day GO Transit service in the bi-level cars required to meet that demand is going to be, I'm told, about another 600 cars over the next six years or so. All of that work is going to come out of my plant in Thunder Bay–Atikokan for those Bombardier workers. So when it comes to a commitment to mass transit in the province of Ontario, we're happy to compare our record to just about anybody's record in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further? The member from Huron–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, but you're getting there. It's right next door, and it's a great spot to be.

I'd like to congratulate my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville on his election. It's been interesting to hear him speak about his support of the throne speech, and I have a couple of questions that I just need to ask.

So you've talked about jobs, and I have to say I'm totally disappointed that there wasn't one word in your throne speech about agriculture. Let's not forget that farmers feed cities. Where was one word about what you're going to do? It was great that you brought out the risk management, ironically a couple of weeks before the election, a long time beyond the four years that you could have implemented it.

You've talked about keeping your word numerous times in your speech. What about the gas plant? Is it on? Isn't it on? What's the cost going to be when you finally either build it or destroy it and demolish it? We just need one answer there.

I'm pleased to hear—and I congratulate you on funding for your hospital. Over a number of years ago, Markdale was promised \$3 million for the planning of their hospital. In your throne speech the other day it's not even on the five-year list. Those people came to the table from Markdale, raised \$13 million, which sits in a bank account today while their dilapidated hospital falls down around them. When will you commit to making Markdale a reality?

You continue to talk about committing and making promises and keeping them. I think I continue to read and hear that you do not. You go back on your promises. You do not come forward and do the things that you say you will do in my riding, and that's why I believe we retain the riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for a 22nd year.

Rural Ontario is listening. Rural Ontario is watching. Take a look at the map and look at the promises made, the promises kept. I would suggest that you are struggling in your ability.

We need to focus, my colleague, Mr. Speaker, and all of the colleagues in this great House, on reining in spending, getting our deficit in order and ensuring that Ontario is once again the thriving economic engine of our great country. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member has two minutes to respond.



**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you, Speaker. I thank the members from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Davenport, Thunder Bay–Atikokan and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for their enlightening comments.

To the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London: I congratulate you on your election, sir. You talked about a fair number of things; not many of them were in the throne speech and certainly none in the remarks that I made. You did mention the coal plants, which will close in 2014, on schedule: another promise made and another promise kept.

To the member from Davenport, he is simply factually incorrect in his assertion that there is nothing in the speech from the throne on transit. Let me read to you, sir, from the speech from the throne. It says, “Your government has already committed to new transit in Toronto, Ottawa and Kitchener–Waterloo, a new subway to York University and Vaughan, and a rail link between Pearson Airport and Union Station.

“The next step in that transit plan will be the introduction of two-way, all-day GO train service—which will help keep Ontarians living in the GTA and greater Golden Horseshoe moving while creating 68,000 new jobs.”

Just to make sure, I’ll ask page Owen here to bring you a copy of the throne speech. You’ll find it on page 5. I urge you to read it.

To my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan: He definitely outlined to the House how my colleague from Ottawa–Orléans, a great and a very experienced member who’s well respected in his community, has made such a difference in eastern Ottawa and certainly talked about how Ontario has picked up the challenge of public transit after years of NDP and Conservative neglect.

Finally, to my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, congratulations to you, sir, on your election. Will the member—my question to him—support the risk management proposals that will so generously benefit our agricultural community?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. I have to say first I will be sharing my time with the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I have to also say that the House is a little bit quieter when you’re in that chair compared to the other chair. But I’m looking forward to such thoughtful guidance from the Chair with you in it today.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I’m sure when you listened to the throne speech being delivered and in reading it and comparing it with the actions of this Liberal government, the only word that really comes to mind is “befuddled.” “Befuddled” is about the only way we can describe this throne speech.

I heard the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan earlier bemoaning that they can’t do anything, that there are things beyond their control. There was a multitude of excuses about why they can’t do things.

On page 2 of the throne speech, “Ours is a time of significant global change, upheaval and uncertainty....

“We don’t fully know what the global economic uncertainty means for Ontario....

“Simply put, our world has entered into a time of slower growth.”

I went through the throne speech. Thirteen times they refer to the global economic situation—13 times. Lucky number 13. On page 2, there are eight references to global economic factors. When will these people on the Liberal side wake up and just not make excuses? Excuses are not reasons.

I say, let’s compare the reality. In Saskatchewan today, their wages and incomes have risen above Ontario’s. They’re in the global economy too, aren’t they? Aren’t they in the global economy? Newfoundland went from a have-not to a have province. They’re in the global economy, aren’t they? We went from a have to a have-not province.

1720

Our unemployment rate is above the national average—8.1%—and it’s been like that for five years. Last month, October, we lost 75,000 jobs. This Ontario Liberal government has become a drag on Canada’s economy. You’ve become a drag on Confederation. You’ve put us into a have-not position. And all we get from the Liberals is, “My hands are tied, my hands are tied. It’s the global economic fiasco.” Doom and gloom. You know what? That’s a good phrase.

Here’s a page from the Toronto Star: “Ontario Faces Four-Year Recovery.” And Robert Benzie and Rob Ferguson say, “Doom and gloom in Ontario’s economy will linger for another four years.” Well, I think Rob Benzie and Rob Ferguson got it wrong, because these guys are not going to last another four years. The doom and gloom will not last another four years, because this Liberal government will not last another four years. But as long as they’re here, there will be doom and gloom in Ontario. That is without a doubt. That is undeniable.

I have to also say that it was interesting, again, reading this befuddled throne speech and seeing the actions of the Liberal government. Now, we know they’ve brought in this home renovation tax credit, which will give seniors a benefit—not everybody; just seniors. They’re bringing in change that will give a benefit to some students. So some seniors will get a benefit, and some students will get a benefit.

If you go to the throne speech on page 9—maybe I should send this over to Bob so he can read page 9 as well—this is what the throne speech says: “Your government rejects the politics of division and rancour and will oppose measures....” And what do they do? The first day after reading that throne speech, they bring in policies of division; another befuddled, contradictory, hypocritical position of this Liberal government. It’s just on and on and on: On 13 different occasions in here they make up excuses why they’re failing Ontario, 13 different phrases in here that try to show excuses as reasons for the Liberal government’s failings and failure



of the people of this country and the people of our province.

Again, more unemployment, diminishing wages. And what did the Premier of Saskatchewan have to say this week? The Premier of Saskatchewan has—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Peterborough on a point of order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, traditionally the use of the word “hypocritical” has been ruled inappropriate language in this Legislature, so I’m asking you to rule on the use of that word by the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Actually, the Speaker has been nailed on that one. You will withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I will withdraw that comment.

Speaker, the Premier of Saskatchewan, Brad Wall—of course, his province has moved from have-not to have status—was quoted earlier this week as encouraging Ontarians to come to Saskatchewan, where there is indeed economic growth, where there are robust job opportunities. Isn’t it just amazing that Saskatchewan will now be the haven and the place for Ontario residents to actually find advantages, prosperity and economic opportunities?

I have to say this, Speaker: My family came to Canada in 1950 from Newfoundland. At that time, Ontario was a “have” province. Ontario was the land of opportunities. Well, I’ll tell you, there are a lot of Newfoundlanders going back to Newfoundland now from Ontario. They’re now the province of opportunities. This Liberal government has killed—suffocated—prosperity and opportunities for all people in Ontario.

Really, Speaker, they have to recognize that it’s not only Ontario that they’re harming; they’re harming our whole country. They’re harming the economic prosperity of our country, and all they do is come up with excuses and more excuses and think that that justifies them continuing on the same path of politics of division, politics of rancour, politics of envy. They just keep coming up with more and more policies to split, divide and harm our opportunities.

Speaker, befuddlement is the real word for this throne speech—and doom and gloom, as the Toronto Star has set forth. As long as this Liberal government has that tenuous hold on government, there will be doom and gloom, but we’ll do everything possible to make sure that that doom and gloom ends quickly, and the same with this Liberal government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. It’s an honour to be here in this House after 20 years, when I served as a legislative page. It’s amazing how fast time flies.

I wanted to take a moment to offer my most sincere congratulations to our Speaker on his recent election as Speaker. Indeed, with the first minority government in a generation, thanks to him for offering to let his name

stand and accepting the challenges that our minority government will present.

Allow me to also offer my thanks, congratulations and appreciation to former Lambton–Kent–Middlesex MPP Maria Van Bommel. Ms. Van Bommel is a friendly and active member of our community and served the residents of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex to the best of her ability for nearly eight years. During this time, she served in important roles, as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. I thank her for her service and thank her for her commitment to the residents of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Speaking of campaigning, I must express my thanks to those who volunteered and worked on my recent and previous campaign. Allow me to recognize my riding president and campaign chair, Mr. John Fraser; my campaign managers, Mr. Joshua Workman and Mr. Don Adams; my campaign CFO, Jennifer Grover; and my campaign advisers, Peter Twynstra, David Crone, Henry Weirsmas, Rick Devolder, Bill Graham, Betty Ann and Jack MacKinnon, Jack Biernaski, Eileen McCoy, and the other volunteers, activists, donors and members of our riding association. Without their efforts and help I would not be standing here today as the MPP for the great riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

But most of all, I want to take time to thank my wonderful and loving wife, Kate Bartz, for all of her support over the years and for her assistance in helping make this dream a reality. Kate is my best friend, my best adviser and my strongest supporter.

The great riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex is unique and diverse and is located west of London. This rural riding in southwestern Ontario runs from Lake Huron in the northwest to the Thames River in the southeast and Lake St. Clair in the southwest.

As one of the largest ridings in southern Ontario, it contains the towns of Strathroy, Wallaceburg, Southwest Middlesex, Lambton Shores, North Middlesex, Lucan Biddulph, Middlesex Centre, Brooke-Alvinston, Dawn-Euphemia, Warwick and my great hometown, the village of Newbury. A portion of the city of Chatham-Kent lying northwest of the Thames River also falls within the riding. It contains several native reserves, including the Chippewas of the Thames, Kettle Point, Walpole Island and Oneida.

**1730**

Lambton–Kent–Middlesex is home to many small businesses, many family-owned for almost 100 years. The major source of employment is in the manufacturing sector, followed closely by agriculture. Indeed, I am very blessed and humbled to have been elected to represent such a diverse riding and a diverse group of people, and represent them is exactly what I intend on doing. You see, residents of my riding, like all ridings of Ontario, have been extremely hard hit by the current economic challenges facing Ontario. With regular plant closings, job losses and other announcements continuing, many families in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex are having trouble making ends meet.



Residents of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex have sent me here to be their voice and their representative here in this House. They have sent me to bring solutions from home to Queen's Park and they have sent me to make positive change to affect the lives of many in my great riding. They elected me to stand up for our three hospitals: Four Counties Health Services in Newbury, Sydenham hospital in Wallaceburg and Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital in Strathroy. I am proud to represent the people in my riding, people who work hard, pay their taxes, play by the rules and contribute to the communities they love. Standing today and delivering my inaugural speech to this House is an honour, but it is more of an honour to represent the great people and great families of my riding.

Although today is my maiden speech to this House, I would like to provide some comments and feedback on the recent speech from the throne and its content. You see, Mr. Speaker, I am extremely concerned that the recent speech from the throne, Dalton McGuinty's speech from the throne, has failed to address both Ontario's job crisis and Ontario's debt and spending crisis. Since the election alone, our provincial deficit has increased by a staggering \$1 billion. Indeed, with this speech, Premier McGuinty is adding \$2.5 billion in new government spending to our growing deficit.

As you will also know, Ontario families reduced the governing Liberals from a majority down to a minority while sending an expanded PC caucus to Queen's Park to stand up for these priorities: to stand up for the priorities of everyday families, to stand up for the priorities of families in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and throughout Ontario. It is a job that I am proud to have and a job that needs doing.

You see, Mr. Speaker, it is vital for the health and welfare of our great province that we reduce spending, reduce the deficit, pay down our debt and begin to grow Ontario's economy again. Ontario was once the engine of our great confederacy, the driver for all of Canada, but of course, those days are not here at the present. But all hope is not lost and can't be lost. We can return our province to greatness.

Mr. Speaker, our party has introduced an amendment to Dalton McGuinty's speech, and as you know, we are working hard to address our jobs crisis by reforming our apprenticeship system to create 200,000 skilled-trades jobs, something that will make a major impact in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. The Ontario PC caucus is also working hard to address Ontario's debt crisis by calling for a legislated mandatory public wage freeze. Where the voluntary wage freeze of this government has failed, we will deliver.

Over the weekend, I was home in my riding and had the opportunity to speak to residents throughout Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I told them that unfortunately, I would be voting against the throne speech unless Dalton McGuinty supports our PC amendment to freeze public sector wages and create 200,000 skilled-trades jobs.

As a former three-term municipal councillor and now the proud MPP from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, I entered politics to help find solutions, to make the tough decisions and to get Ontario back on the right track again. It will take hard work, it will take sacrifice, it will take dedication and it will not be easy, but the rewards, the prize of all of our efforts, will be exceptional and is badly needed for all of Ontario.

My parents, Gary and Susan McNaughton, raised me to have a strong voice and a determination to work to improve the lives of others. We do it every day at our family business, McNaughton's in Newbury, where we proudly employ over 65 people from throughout the community. My family has a long history of public service, from my great-grandfather Hugh McNaughton, warden of Middlesex county; to my grandfather John Duncan McNaughton, who was one of the founders of the Four Counties General Hospital in Newbury; to my aunt Diane Brewer, who is the iron lady of Middlesex county and has served as reeve of Newbury for over 26 years; and now myself. It is my hope, my aspiration and my goal to serve the people, to honestly represent their wishes and desires, and to work to improve and restore our great province of Ontario.

My grandfather, whom I never had the chance to meet, as he passed away before I was born, had a quote on the back of his business card that read, "I expect to pass through this world but once. If there's any kindness or any good deed I can do for my fellow beings, let me do it now, for I may not pass this way again." These are words I intend to live by.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time here today, and I thank the other members for their attention and support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'd like to extend my congratulations to the member who just spoke. I'm also a new member, and I appreciate standing up for the first time here.

That might be most of what we share in common, I think, because I too have not heard about the need for real public investment to stimulate our economies, to make sure that we have the kind of province that is sustainable and viable. But in response to the member previously, too, who wanted to correct me, indeed, I was noting the fact that there was no money in the throne speech dedicated for operating costs. It's all well and good to show up and do ribbon cuttings and capital unveilings, but what is the point of having public transit if we have no operating costs to actually make those trains run? In fact, the Eglinton LRT is something that the NDP has long supported; we were building underground transit back 20 years ago before my friends to the right decided to fill in that hole.

But when we are talking about new investment in public transit, we do need to talk about the fact that this government cancelled a huge amount of funding to a public transit strategy that was well researched, that was well thought out. It was called Transit City. It would have served the entire city of Toronto very well. We are



now left with a transit plan that is not working, and we're still waiting to find the money to actually make it work.

When we talk about the ARL, the rail link to the airport, this is not something that I could brag about in my community. We are going to be sending hundreds of trains from Union Station to the airport each day, and those trains are going to contaminate and pollute our neighbourhoods; 300,000 people are going to be affected by these diesel trains. People in Davenport are completely opposed to it. They have not been properly consulted; they have not been listened to. Even the medical officer of health from Toronto has said that this is an environmental and a health disaster.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further questions and comments?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Let me first of all congratulate the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, and particularly the kind words that he had to say about his predecessor, who was a great presence in the House here for eight years.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** It doesn't matter whether or not the individual was a Liberal MPP, an NDP MPP or a Tory MPP: All of us bring something of ourselves into this House and all of us want to do the best for this province. Yes, from time to time we may see the world a little bit differently or what it needs in order to deal with the issues that we have—it needs different answers etc.—but I respect each and every member of this House, both present and in the past, as to what they've contributed to this. The worst thing that we can do is badmouth individuals that have gone before us or not say anything about them at all.

What I found so interesting was the contrast between what this member had to say in a very positive way about what he wants to contribute here and what the other member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington had to say, because he was pretty negative about this province, if anything else. I resent those kinds of comments because I am absolutely convinced that the people of Ontario, indeed most of the people of Ontario—as a matter of fact, how we are regarded elsewhere in this Canadian Confederation that we have is that we are still the main part of Canada. We are still the engine of Canada. We will always be that way. Even though we may be getting some equalization payments from the federal government at this point in time, let us not forget that we still put an awful lot more tax dollars into the federal coffers than any other province. As a matter of fact, we still put \$25 billion a year more into Confederation and into the federal system than we are taking out. So we are a definite, positive influence in this great country of ours.

1740

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First off, I'll say to the member for Kingston and the Islands that I don't think the member from

Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington was having his maiden speech, so he can be a little more pointed in what he's saying.

But first of all, Speaker, I want to welcome the 31 new members to this Legislature. I will not forget the first day that I entered this House, this chamber, and how daunting, but special, it was. And when I had that opportunity to make my maiden speech, that was truly something I will never forget.

I want to reference my friend from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. We have a lot in common, Monte and I. Both of us were Home Hardware dealers. Yeah, Home Hardware dealers. Both of us served on municipal councils before we had the honour of being elected here, and I think that's important as well. And both of us had families that had long political involvement as well.

You can tell by Mr. McNaughton's maiden speech that he's going to make a tremendous contribution, not only to this chamber and to the people of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, but to the entire province of Ontario. I look forward to a very bright future from this young man, a little bit younger than myself—

**Mr. Norm Miller:** A lot younger.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, I say to my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka, do we have to make a point of it? Yes, he is a little bit younger than me but I see a great future here and elsewhere for Monte McNaughton. And we've waited for Monte for quite some time, because he was a candidate in the 2007 election as well. And I say, yes, his predecessor, Maria Van Bommel—you couldn't find a nicer and a finer person. But this is the nature of politics, and we're proud to have Monte on our team, we're proud to have him from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and we're proud to have him representing here in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First, I'd like to begin with congratulating as well my colleague from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I think it's important to note that in his speech he did, as the Attorney General mentioned, acknowledge his predecessor, and it's a show of class; it's a very classy thing to do, and I think that we need more of that in this room, in this House. I hope to join my friend in adding more civility and more class to our dealings in this House, because that's the way we can ensure we do the best job for our constituents. So I applaud his civility and I applaud his classiness.

With respect to my other colleague from Lennox–Addington and his comments, there were some comments about the fact that we've lost 75,000 jobs. I concur; we have lost a great deal of jobs, and any jobs that we have created have been temporary and part-time. That's my largest concern: the fact that the jobs that have been replacing these good-paying manufacturing jobs have been part-time, temporary and precarious jobs.

In my riding of Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Mr. Speaker, there are many people who are working in the same



factory, year after year, under temporary job agencies, without the benefits that they're entitled to, without good wages, without benefits. This is a serious concern, and I heard nothing in the throne speech that addressed this concern, the fact that we need to take care of those who are facing temporary work, who are facing precarious employment. We need to change that into good-paying, full-time jobs and transition it so that people in Ontario can earn a decent living and can live with dignity in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. The member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has two minutes.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the members who spoke after me from Davenport, Kingston and the Islands, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke—my good friend John Yakabuski, and as Mr. Yakabuski mentioned, a fellow Home Hardware dealer—and the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton. Thank you very much. It is an honour to be here in this House in Ontario.

We've put forward, as the members know, amendments to the throne speech. We have a jobs crisis and we have a spending crisis in Ontario. We put forward ideas. It's time that the government listens to our ideas.

We continue to hear in the press about lip service being paid to the opposition parties to making this Legislature work, but I urge the government and the cabinet to seriously consider the consequences facing Ontario if we don't get our government spending under control. I mean, a day before the election, the deficit was \$15 billion; a day after the election, the deficit is \$16 billion.

It's a concern for our kids and our kids' children, so I just urge the government to begin working with the opposition parties and to start listening to the same constituents I'm talking to. We need a new path here in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker. What I would like to do before I begin is to introduce Francesca Zielinski, who is the daughter of the member from Parkdale-High Park—she's right there—and her friend Jason. Welcome.

I missed this place, I have to tell you, because I miss talking to the public. I miss when I say, "Welcome to this political forum. We are on live, and it's a quarter to six, and it's Monday."

I want to try to be nice. I really do. I make an effort, because you have to make an effort. And given that there wasn't much in the throne speech, it's so easy to be nice, because there's so little there to attack. There was nothing in the throne speech except the predictable things—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Sorry, John?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But you'll find a way of attacking, I'm sure.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'll do my best, because I'll find a way to attack the Tories as best as I can from time

to time, especially when I show the links between the Tories and the Liberals.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I know. You're quite right. And we have had one close link in the last week. It was just a week ago where Tories and New Democrats agreed. It's hard to believe, I know, but we agreed that we should remove the HST on heating because heating—we agreed with Tories. It's a surprise that Liberals do not agree that the HST—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** John, I'm just about to say how we agree. Let me work on it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Through you, Speaker, of course—always.

We came to an agreement—an accord, as it were—with Tories that the HST is a bad thing, particularly as it is applied to heating. We say that in this northern climate, this is a huge cost to ordinary folks, a huge cost to people who don't earn a lot. You heard the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, who was talking about—I'm going to get to that in a few moments. A whole lot of people are living precariously. That's something we should worry about.

But we, the Tories and New Democrats, agreed last week, and between the two of us, we have 54 members—more than the Minister of Health claims, because she often wants to say, "But we are elected to govern." This is true, but we, between us, have more than you. It's something for you to remember every now and then when you say you want to work with the others, when you say, "Audi alteram partem."

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** "Hear the other side."

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You see, you've got to hear the other side from time to time. I'm not saying all the time; understand me. But every now and then when you say, "Work with us," we say to you, "Work with us too."

Last week, we gave you but one example of how we can work together, and you decided that you don't want to work with us. You can't have a one-way street here. You need for the doors to be open every now and then—don't get me wrong: where we can agree. And you will be reminded that the electorate voted for 54 members who are in the opposition benches. Don't forget it.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yeah, but not the majority.

1750

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It is a majority over the 53, now 52. But all I am saying is when you, individually, collectively—when the Premier says, "Work with us," we want to say to you—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** —Attorney General, "Work with us, too," because we can't work with you if you don't listen to us; you understand that. It's a very simple formula. Every now and then we're going to work with you, and I suspect even the Tories will work with you from time to time, particularly when you talk about tax

cuts for the corporations, because when you say, "We want to continue cutting corporate taxes," the Tories are going to be right behind you—not the New Democrats, but they will. We are talking about a mutual relationship that we will have from time to time, and in order for you as a government to have some credibility, you have to listen. If I were the Premier, I would have said this—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I know I'm not the Premier. But if I were, I would have said the following: "I respect the will of the two opposition parties who have been elected—the 54 of them—to listen to the needs that have been expressed by both political parties," and on this one, while we disagree, were I the Premier, "We're going to listen to what the other two parties are saying." That's what I would have said.

Imagine the credibility you would have had as a party—imagine. You could have said, "It will cost some dollars, this is true. But we are going to share the cost that the other two parties have made because we feel that what they're saying reflects a significant portion of the population, and as such, we will respect the will of the opposition parties." That's what I would have said, but I'm not the Premier.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** You never will be.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Ah, you see? You see, member from Willowdale, this is where you are wrong. You were so close. Many of you were close to losing your seats, and indeed, this slim majority that you have as a government—you must never forget—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You're quite right, Berardinetti, you're quite right. But the point is this: Things move around. From time to time, people change and governments get booted out of office—mercifully, I say, because this is a good thing. From time to time, every political party has to be given the boot, because that's how you learn. See, Liberals now, at the federal level, are learning what it takes to get back into power. I can see Bob Rae just scratching his way up to try to be the leader of that Liberal Party—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** That's not what I'm talking about. I am talking about your current interim leader, desperately wanting to get back into power. They have been taught a lesson at the federal level.

It's a good lesson because Liberals have nothing to say anymore. When the NDPers stop giving you ideas, you've got nothing to say. That's your problem. Not only have you had a series of bad leaders, you've also had a deficit in terms of policy ideas. Between the two of them you are lost, wandering about, trying to find a saviour to bring you back to power. You see, that saviour is not coming. He ain't coming, and I think it's good, and it's a good, tough lesson for Liberals to learn. God bless, I say. Actually, the member from Parkdale–High Park would say that more than I would, but it's okay. It's okay.

We often hear in this House—by Tories and Liberals, dare I say—that we don't have a revenue problem; we've

got a spending problem. I hear that from the Tories all the time. Isn't that true?

**Interjection:** That's true.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yeah. The Liberals used to say the same thing, by the way. It's okay.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Were you here in 1990?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** That's too far to go, I realize. The Attorney General—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes, the Speaker is not happy with the dialogue going across and forth. We come through this party, thank you very much.

I would remind the ministers in the front: Set a good example for your new members.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Ain't that something? It's beautiful. I love it.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** This is one good Speaker we have here, I'm telling you. I'm impressed. I really am.

Anyway, through you, Speaker, to them, of course, in case I forget: We've got a revenue problem. This is where we disagree with both of those parties over there to my left and the right. We have a revenue problem, and unless we fix this, not only will the deficit remain as high as it is—because, dare I say it, it's going to go higher—not only will the deficit stay where it is, it's going to get worse. With that, unless we deal with the revenue side, all of the service infrastructure that we have so long loved in this province is just going to dwindle—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** See you later, Attorney General. Good to see you.

The service infrastructure is just going to disappear ever so slowly.

The member from Gore—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Bramalea–Gore–Milton.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Malton.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It is so far, I'm telling you. My son lives in them parts. Man, is it far, I've got to tell you.

We've got a revenue problem. The problems we have are so severe that in the next 10 years it's going to get worse. So let's look at the broader picture. It's been talked about by many, but you need to be reminded, because the problems are bad.

Poverty is not going down. Under the Tories, when we had eight years of a good economy, we didn't deal with the poverty issues. Under the Liberals, when we had many, many good years of a good economy, we didn't do a good job.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Where's the pecunia?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The pecunia that you had, which you did not spend wisely. For eight long years under the Tories and then under these fine Liberals, poverty goes up; the deficit goes up; unemployment goes up. Good-paying jobs disappear. Food banks were increasing under the Tories, and it continues with the Liberals. Precarious employment continues, with people



working at one or two part-time jobs. College teachers—half of them part-time, and 25% of university professors working on contract. Do you not get a sense that we've got a little problem in the province? I do, and we're not dealing with that. So, when you say that things are great, they're not. You all know that things are not great.

Did we have anything in the throne speech, member from Willowdale, that deals with any of these problems?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Oh, yeah? Tell me one.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Substantial policy.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Substantial policy nothing. He's talking in a vacuum. There's absolutely nothing there—absolutely nothing.

All of the issues that I talk about, from food banks to poverty issues to wages—which, by the way, have gone down since the 1980s. Since the 1980s, wages have been flatlined. Do you realize this? I hope I'm not saying anything that you don't know. Wages have been going like this: The top 10% of the population's wages are going up and the majority of people's wages are just flatlining and going down. Surely you would know that, right?

We are going back into the 1950s. We're going back into an era where my father, coming here in 1956, struggled like all the other immigrants. We are going to back to that era, and it's getting worse. The poor immigrants who have followed us, who thought they would have what we had in the 1950s—mind you, not the 1950s because the 1950s were bad, but the 1960s were amazing for all the immigrants because that's when the economy went like this and wages went like that. Good jobs were abundant, and manufacturing jobs were there that provided for a healthy, strong middle class. We don't have it any more. It's all gone and getting worse.

So there's nothing to be proud of. Is there anything in this budget that helps? Oh, lest I forget, it's the renovation dollars that the Liberals are spending. Yeah, that should do it. That should lift us up a lot. It will create a good—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Due to the fact that we have met the magic hour, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Haltoun Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	









*Continued from back cover*

<b>Chicken industry</b>	
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	106
<b>Evelyn Masson</b>	
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	107
<b>Tabling of sessional papers</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	107
<b>Committee membership</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	107

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

<b>Standing Committee on Estimates</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	107
Report deemed received.....	108

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 9, Mr. Norm Miller / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun, projet de loi 9, M. Norm Miller</b>	
First reading agreed to.....	108
Mr. Norm Miller .....	108
<b>Local Municipality Democracy Act, 2011, Bill 10, Mr. Smith / Loi de 2011 sur la démocratie au sein des municipalités locales, projet de loi 10, M. Smith</b>	
First reading agreed to.....	108
Mr. Todd Smith.....	108

## MOTIONS

<b>Appointment of House officers</b>	
Hon. John Milloy .....	109
Motion agreed to .....	109

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Eastern Ontario development</b>	
Mr. Steve Clark .....	109
<b>Crematoria</b>	
Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	109
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	109
<b>Diagnostic services</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	110

<b>Correctional facilities</b>	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	110
<b>Ombudsman of Ontario</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	110
<b>Renewable energy</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	110
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Ms. Laurie Scott .....	110
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	111
<b>Rural schools</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	111
<b>Aggregate extraction</b>	
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	111
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	111
<b>Hydro dam</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller.....	112
<b>Correction of record</b>	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong .....	112

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Throne speech debate / Débat sur le discours du trône</b>	
Ms. Soo Wong.....	112
Mr. Grant Crack .....	114
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	115
Mme France Gélinas .....	115
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	116
Mr. John O'Toole.....	116
Ms. Soo Wong.....	116
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	117
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	118
Mr. Michael Prue .....	120
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	120
Mr. Norm Miller.....	120
Mme France Gélinas .....	121
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	121
Mme France Gélinas .....	121
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	124
Mr. Bill Walker .....	124
Ms. Cindy Forster.....	125
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	125
Mme France Gélinas .....	125
Ms. Dipika Damerla .....	126
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	126
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	129
Ms. Cindy Forster.....	129

Mr. Mario Sergio .....	130
Mr. Jack MacLaren.....	130
Ms. Dipika Damerla .....	130
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	131
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	134
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	134
Mr. Jim McDonell .....	134
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	135
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	135
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	135
Mr. Mario Sergio .....	138
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	138
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	138
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	139
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	139
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	139
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	141
Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	142
Mr. Jonah Schein .....	142
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	143
Mr. Bill Walker.....	143
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	144
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	144
Mr. Monte McNaughton.....	145
Mr. Jonah Schein .....	146
Hon. John Gerretsen .....	147
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	147
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	147
Mr. Monte McNaughton.....	148
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	148
Debate deemed adjourned.....	150



## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 28 November 2011 / Lundi 28 novembre 2011

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	93
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	93
Hon. Michael Gravelle.....	93
Ms. Soo Wong.....	93
Hon. Ted McMeekin.....	93
Hon. Michael Gravelle.....	93

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Government spending

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	93
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	93

#### Government spending

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	94
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	95

#### Government spending

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	95
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	95

#### Manufacturing jobs

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	96
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	96

#### Government spending

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	97
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	97

#### Public transit

Mr. Jonah Schein.....	97
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	97

#### Immigrant services

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	98
Hon. Charles Sousa.....	98

#### Power plants

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	99
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	99

#### Manufacturing jobs

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong .....	99
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	99

#### Aboriginal education

Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	100
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	100
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	100

#### Hydro transmission

Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	100
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	101

#### Bicycle safety

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	101
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	101

#### Hospitals

Mr. Rob Leone .....	102
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	102

#### Skilled trades

Mr. Michael Coteau.....	102
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	103

#### Crematorium

Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	103
Hon. Margaret R. Best .....	103

#### Use of question period

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	104
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	104

#### Visitors

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	104
-------------------------------------	-----

#### Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	104
-------------------------------------	-----

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	104
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	104
Ms. Soo Wong.....	105

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

#### Chicken industry

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	105
-------------------------	-----

#### Supportive housing

Ms. Cindy Forster.....	105
------------------------	-----

#### Terry Fox Public School

Ms. Soo Wong.....	105
-------------------	-----

#### Correctional facilities

Mr. Bill Walker .....	105
-----------------------	-----

#### Ocularists

Mme France Gélinas .....	106
--------------------------	-----

#### Marlies Klekner-Alt

M. Phil McNeely .....	106
-----------------------	-----

#### Dorothy Kew

Mrs. Jane McKenna.....	106
------------------------	-----

*Continued on inside back cover*

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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 29 November 2011

Mardi 29 novembre 2011

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller





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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 29 November 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 novembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Mr. Milloy, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to say a few words on the record about this important bill. I'd also like to note that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa Centre, who of course is also the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. I'll be asking him to take the bulk of the time.

I'll simply put on the record that this is a very important bill which responds to a pledge that was made during the campaign to help those seniors who want to live in their homes and family members who want to support them, as well as, of course, brings forward much-needed stimulus to the economy, to the construction centre and the renovation centre. It's a bill that I know will find great support on all sides of this House.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, with that I'm going to turn the floor over to my colleague the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, who, I know, wants to get into greater detail. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak, and thanks to the House leader for his comments and for sharing his time with me.

Speaker, I don't think I have yet officially had the chance to congratulate you on your election as the Speaker. I look forward to working with you and really appreciate all of the dignity and the decorum you're bringing to this House. All the best to you, in this whole term, the four years that we'll be here serving the people of Ontario.

I'm really pleased to stand here today in the House on the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, which was tabled by my colleague the Honourable Dwight Duncan, the Minister of Finance. This proposed new act contains amendments to the Taxation Act, 2007, and would implement an innovative new tax credit that would help Ontario's seniors, relieve pressures on the health care system and boost economic growth. I think these are three really important issues that we have to pay attention to and put our mind to. We need to, of course, continue to help our seniors so they can continue to live in their own homes. We need to make sure that we find innovative ways to relieve pressures on our health care system, in light of the aging demographics. In these tough economic times, as we're coming out of a recession, there's a lot of instability and uncertainty that exists across the globe. We need to find smart policies that will boost economic growth. This bill achieves these three things: It helps our seniors, it relieves pressures on our health care system, and it boosts our economy and will help create jobs.

Bill 2 reconfirms our government's focus on building a stronger, more competitive economy and creating jobs. It also provided an update on Ontario's economic performance for 2011. The update, Speaker, admittedly, was sobering, but not without hope, because in spite of global economic uncertainty, Ontario has experienced moderate economic growth for most of the last two years. As we hear in the news almost daily, many other places around the world remain subject to much greater volatility. There's not a single day that you can turn on the news in the evening and not hear about the economic challenges in Iceland, Ireland, Greece, Spain, most recently in Germany and France, Hungary—and the list seems to keep going on and on.

The European economy continues to present new challenges, while growth in the United States, Ontario's largest trading partner, remains weak and unstable—something that is extremely alarming for us. The impact of continuing global economic uncertainty on Ontario families remains a concern. As a result of global pressures, the provincial economy will continue to face enormous challenges. After all, Speaker, our economy is very



much tied in with the global economy. We have to pay attention to what's happening around the globe, and of course it has a significant impact here at home, in Ontario.

The era of slower growth in much of the world is going to be with us for an extended period. This means that for the foreseeable future, modest economic growth will be the new normal here in Ontario, as elsewhere, and we have seen glimmers of this already. Over the last eight months, the global economy has seen a widespread downward shift in projections for growth. When the 2011 budget was published this past March, the average private sector forecast for Ontario's real GDP growth was 2.6% for the year. More recent projections are forecasting growth of just 2%. Mr. Speaker, this rate of growth is undeniably lower than what Ontario enjoyed even as recently as four years ago. But I would like to point out that as of the second quarter of 2011, Ontario's real GDP was just 0.1% below the pre-recession level—just 0.1%. So in many ways, Ontario has largely recovered from the recent global recession.

But building a stronger, more competitive economy is about more than improving forecasts and GDP numbers. It's about helping people get good, high-paying jobs—a point which I think all members of this House will agree with.

Since the low point of the recession in May 2009, employment in Ontario has increased by almost 267,000 net new jobs. This is equal to nearly half of all new jobs created in Canada from coast to coast. Half of the new jobs created in Canada took place right here in Ontario, and the majority of the new jobs created over the past two years have been good-quality, high-paying, full-time jobs. Full-time employment rose by 237,900 jobs over this period while part-time employment increased by 28,900 jobs. As of October 2011, employment was 10,000 jobs above the pre-recession peak in September 2008. I think it's an important distinction to make—the kind of recovery we've been able to make from one of the most devastating global recessions we experienced in 2008-09. The province's unemployment rate has also fallen from a peak of 9.4% during the recession to 8.1%.

0910

So far this year, Ontario has created 128,400 net new jobs, which account for more than 45% of all jobs created in Canada. These are all positive economic signs, because building an economy that creates good jobs also supports strong schools and hospitals.

You know, Speaker, as I'm in my community, and I'm sure other members will share the same experiences, when we were talking to our constituents, especially during the election, as we were out in our communities knocking on doors, the issues around jobs was the number one topic of discussion. People wanted to know about what we can all do to create new jobs. There is a high level of anxiety and uncertainty that exists in the global economy; of course, that is then reflected in our communities as well. Even though people may have good-paying jobs, they are still concerned about whether their

jobs will stay there tomorrow, and whether their quality of life will continue to improve.

So our job, of course, on their behalf, is to ensure that we continue to have a laser-focused vision on the jobs agenda to make sure that we do not move away from creating new jobs. Therefore, we have to support policies and measures that will have the effect of creating new jobs, not measures that will be neutral in terms of job creation, because we cannot at this time afford to support programs or measures that will not result in any net new jobs in our economy.

Speaker, in order to protect these and other public services so valuable to Ontario families, our finances must be put on a long-term sustainable path. In the face of many years of more modest economic growth, the way governments of all political stripes over the last generation have accumulated debt simply cannot continue.

That is why, despite lower private sector projections for economic growth, we are ensuring that Ontario remains on track to meet the fiscal targets projected in the 2011 budget and the first quarter Ontario finances. These fiscal targets include a \$16-billion deficit in 2011-12 and steadily declining deficits of \$15.2 billion in 2012-13 and \$13.3 billion in 2013-14.

Providing world-class public services while balancing the budget in a time of slow economic growth will be a challenge, but it's a challenge we are facing head on. To meet these goals, the government set a target in the 2011 budget of holding growth in overall program spending to 1.4%. That was outlined in the 2011 budget. The Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services is expected to recommend that the target for spending growth be 1%.

The government will consider this and other advice as we prepare the 2012 budget. Any new spending will be paid for through offsetting savings in other areas or through reform of public service delivery. Ministries will be directed to develop and deliver on plans to live within what is affordable given the low rate of economic growth.

Speaker, the McGuinty government has established a record of meeting its targets. We will meet the challenge of lower economic growth through long-term fundamental reforms to the way government works. We will build on our government's track record of reforms to education, health care, taxes and the electricity system. We will focus more than ever on how to get the best value and the best services for Ontario families.

What we will not do, Speaker: We will not take a slash-and-burn approach to the public services so dearly valued by Ontarians. Past experience has shown here in Ontario, as well as elsewhere around the world, that deep, arbitrary across-the-board cuts simply do not work. Slashing and burning key social programs does not deliver true fiscal sustainability. In fact, it creates real hardships for Ontarians. Such drastic cuts would unravel the progress Ontarians have made in improving schools and hospitals and preparing Ontario for the economy of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, meeting the challenge of extended modest economic growth demands a government that is open



to change and innovation, the kind of innovation that Ontarians display time and again. The proposed new healthy homes renovation tax credit is a strong example of this type of innovation. With this proposed new credit, we are clearly demonstrating how our government can develop measures that will assist Ontario families while also supporting the provincial economy. As I mentioned at the outset, our aim through this bill is to help our seniors, to take pressures off our health care system, and of course to boost economic growth. We are trying to meet all three of those objectives through Bill 2.

With this proposed new credit, we are clearly demonstrating our commitment to meet those three goals, because not only would our proposed new credit help seniors stay in their homes longer, but it would benefit all taxpayers by relieving pressures on long-term-care home costs, while also helping to support jobs in the home renovation sector, one of the largest-growing sectors in our economy across the province.

If passed, the proposed healthy homes renovation tax credit would be a new permanent, refundable personal income tax credit to help seniors with the cost of home modifications to make their homes safer and more accessible. The proposed tax credit would cover 15% of up to \$10,000 in eligible alterations to the Ontario principal residence of a senior. This credit would help seniors renovate their homes to improve accessibility, mobility and safety. By improving accessibility, mobility and safety, the credit would help more seniors stay in their homes for longer periods of time.

Mr. Speaker, here is how the healthy homes renovations tax credit would work: Effective October 1, 2011, senior homeowners and tenants 65 years of age or older, as well as people who share a home with a senior relative, would be allowed to claim a refundable tax credit of up to \$1,500 for expenses on permanent modifications to the home. Expenses would be eligible only to the extent that they improve accessibility or help a senior to be more functional or mobile at home. Some examples of proposed eligible expenses, and this is by no means a complete list, include certain renovations that would permit first-floor occupancy or secondary suites. Wheelchair ramps, stair and wheelchair lifts and elevators to help seniors get into and out of their homes more easily would also qualify. The credit would apply to items that would make bathrooms safer, including bath lifts, walk-in bathtubs and wheel-in showers, grab bars, related reinforcements around the toilet, bathtub and shower, and non-slip bathroom flooring—things that are crucial to ensure that seniors continue to live in their homes in a safe environment.

Seniors often need modifications that would help with accessibility inside the home, such as installing handrails in corridors, widening passage doors, adding swing-clear hinges on doors to widen doorways and door locks that are easy to operate.

**0920**

Kitchens can present challenges to seniors with mobility issues. So the tax credit would help with renovations

relocating taps to the front or side of a sink for easier access, installing hands-free taps, lowering existing countertops or cupboards or installing adjustable countertops and cupboards, and adding touch-and-release drawers and cupboards that pull out fully. This is functional stuff that just makes it easier for a senior to live in their home, just stuff that is common sense.

Poor lighting can be a hazard for seniors. So the tax credit would apply to additional light fixtures throughout the home and exterior entrances, as well as motion-activated lighting.

Because permanent renovations may not always be the best option, the tax credit will help with modular or movable versions of certain permanent fixtures such as modular ramps and non-fixed bath lifts. These are just a few examples. The rules of eligibility are set out clearly in the legislation.

About two weeks ago, I had the chance to visit a business in my community in Ottawa called Conval-Aid. It's owned by a brother-sister team, Stuart and Merrill Ed. They happen to live in my riding; I know them quite well. It's a family-owned business. It is a business that was, I think, started by their father about 30 or 40 years ago. They provide exactly the kind of things I was just outlining. It's a nice sort of showroom outlet. They have walkers and more accessible toilets, walk-in bathtubs, showers, chairlifts—I got to experience how a chairlift works—things that seniors can need and use. In talking to Stuart and Merrill about this healthy homes renovation tax credit, they were excited that it's going to really help seniors, because they're getting more and more seniors coming in and talking to them and expressing their desire of continuing to live in their own home, a home that has been their sanctuary for 30, 40 or 50 years, sometimes even more, a home that they bought when they were young. They've raised their children in their home. But now, as they're getting older and their mobility is getting limited, it's not easy for them to continue to live at home.

I think every single member can tell a story or two of seniors in their own riding—if you ask them if they would like to continue to live in their own home or move to a smaller place or move to long-term care, the answer will be a resounding “No, I want to live in my own home.” That's where the seniors are independent, where they continue to live with dignity, where they know their neighbours, where their families are comfortable. They love having their grandchildren come to the same home where they raised their parents. This is where they want to live.

I often joke—I don't know if my dad would like the fact that I'm about to mention his age; my father is 76 years old. He lives with my mother in a beautiful home in Oakville. He loves his home. If I ever mentioned that he should downsize or maybe consider getting a condo or something, I think I wouldn't be invited for Christmas this holiday season—because he loves his garden; he loves the fact that the grandkids, my brother's two boys, live not too far from where they live, and they get to babysit them and play with them. But the reality is even



though my father is in pretty good shape, he's getting older. Every time I see him, I see a marked difference in his mobility, in just normal interaction with physical things. That's just a factor. When I was talking to him about this healthy homes renovation tax credit, he was quite excited. He actually said, "You know what? This is going to help, because I do feel now, I think, the need that I should put some support railings in the bathroom just for getting in and out of the bathtub, or maybe reinforce the railings going up to the staircase, or better lighting because of weakening vision." You know, things like that—and, I mean, these are just the very basic things that we could identify that he may need, but as he's getting older, those needs may grow. A tax credit of \$1,500, which is administered in a very simple fashion—where you incur the expense, you keep the receipt and you then apply for the renovation tax credit when you're filing your income tax return and you get a cheque back from the government—is very attractive to him. It encourages him to make those changes that he needs.

Now, yes, the tax credit is not for 100% of the cost; of course not. But it is a significant help and relief to a senior like my father. I think again, like I said, we can all share personal stories or stories of our constituents who have the same issues. When I went to see Stuart and Merrill at their business, Conval-Aid, I never had been before. I'd heard about it. I wanted to see from firsthand experience what kind of products we're talking about. I was quite surprised by the kind of technology that is now available, by how much easier it has become to make homes accessible for seniors.

A lot of these things did not exist before. You know, if you just take modular ramps as an example: Let's say you do not own your home, you rent it, but you need to put a ramp. Of course, you're not going to incur that expense of building a permanent ramp. You can get something which is not permanent—it's modular—which you can actually take with you. Those types of things are covered in this legislation. That tax credit will apply. And relatively speaking, these are not that expensive.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the things that caught my attention was the stair lifts, and I wanted to try one to see how it worked. I think there's a YouTube video out there, because somebody recorded it and put it on the Internet. But I wanted to see how that particular device worked, and I was quite relieved to see how smooth, safe and secure a stair lift was, how slowly it moves. And for a senior, that would be a huge, huge relief: that if you live in a two-storey house, if you don't live in a bungalow, all of a sudden you can go to the second floor of your house by installing this thing.

I asked them, "What's the cost of a stair lift?" It's about \$4,500 with installation. I went, "Okay, so 15% off \$4,500." That's a decent relief for a senior who is considering. So I kind of told them and reminded them to remind their customers that if this legislation passes—and you know, we have to say that—the customers, the seniors who are coming in or the relatives who are coming in to buy these things and getting them installed

should keep those receipts from October 1 onwards, because if the legislation passes, it will apply retroactively and they will be able to apply for the tax credit. I'm going to speak to that later.

The other point, going back to the earlier sort of objective that I was talking about—the three points behind this legislation, which is to help our seniors, relieve pressures off our long-term care and to boost the economy—is that a business like Conval-Aid is a small family business. It's privately owned. You know, Mr. Ed and Mrs. Ed started that business and now they've passed it on to their son and daughter, Stuart and Merrill. It's a business that has been in Ottawa for a long time. It's a competitive business, especially in light of an aging demographic, because there are other companies—large multinationals—who are involved too. But I was really happy to see that it's going to directly help businesses like that in our economy. They have a very significant employment force. They work with a lot of contractors who install these products and who help seniors get adjusted and get comfortable with these different types of technologies or products. That is another very significant element because, as Stuart said to me, this is definitely going to help. This is going to just encourage more seniors to consider modifying their homes and making it more accessible. It's just another great support.

#### 0930

In terms of job creation and in terms of helping our economy, clearly a very direct example that I can give you from my community in Ottawa: A business like Conval-Aid is going to significantly benefit from it.

Speaker, I'm going to talk a little bit more about some of the other features of this bill, because I think they're important. So expenses which would not be eligible in this bill, if this passes, are if their primary purpose is to increase the value of the home, such as plumbing, roof repair and landscaping. Those are the types of things that are not included in this bill. Again, the idea is to make your home more accessible, more living-friendly for a senior, and that's what we're trying to achieve through this bill.

To claim the tax credit, seniors or their family members would have to get receipts from suppliers and contractors, as I was mentioning earlier, helping to ensure that these amounts are reported by vendors for tax purposes. The tax credit will be calculated as 15% of up to \$10,000 in total eligible expenses for a senior's principal residence in Ontario for a calendar year, for a maximum credit of \$1,500 each year. Seniors would claim the tax credit on their personal income tax returns. Like they do at the end of the year, they will just claim it in a very simple way.

Here are a few examples of how the tax credit, if passed, will help Ontario seniors. These are some, I think, common examples that you and I and those who are listening at home can relate to. Take Sally and Joe, who are a retired couple in their late 60s, who own a home in Aurora. Joe's difficulty getting upstairs has meant the couple needed to install a stair lift—the kind I



tried the other day—so that he can access the second storey of the house. Sally and Joe paid their provider \$6,000 for the purchase and installation of the stair lift. They would keep their receipt and claim \$6,000 on their 2012 tax return to receive a credit of \$900. And they will actually get a cheque for \$900 back from the Ontario government.

Or take Anita, who lives with her 75-year-old mother in a rented apartment in Toronto. Anita paid \$500 to have grab bars permanently installed in her bathroom to make it safer for her mother to get in and out of the bath. Anita will keep her receipt and claim \$500 on her 2012 tax return to receive a credit of \$75.

For the 2012 tax year only, the \$10,000 maximum would apply to expenses paid or payable from October 1, 2011, to December 31, 2012. For 2013 and all subsequent years, the maximum will apply to expenses paid or payable from January 1 to December 31 of the year. So that's just a slight thing, an important thing, that I wanted to mention.

We are proposing that this tax credit be refundable and that there be no income testing for eligibility, which means seniors at all income levels could qualify for this tax credit.

Now, Speaker, the key is—and I really do want to stress this, because this is an important point; and those watching this at home, remember this please and pass this along—that if the legislation is passed and this tax credit is put into place, you need to keep your receipts. That's a very important thing. You need the receipts to claim for the tax credit. You won't be able to claim this tax credit if you don't have the receipts. So if the legislation passes, the intention is that this will apply as of October 1, 2011, and so we need to make sure that you keep the receipts for the work, for the purchases you made, for what you paid to the contractor in terms of installation, so that you can submit that with your tax return. That's a very important point and something that I really want our seniors to know.

Now, the proposed tax credit is projected to cost the province about \$60 million in 2011-12. This amount will be offset by savings in business support programs and tax-related expenditures as well as uncommitted capital spending. This means that every dollar spent in this new program would be saved from reduced spending in other areas. This is part of our plan to continue to support Ontarians while prudently managing the province's finances.

Mr. Speaker, helping seniors stay healthy and independent at home becomes increasingly important as Ontario's population ages. Not only does it help seniors live with dignity, but aging at home also helps relieve cost pressures on Ontario's public services. Providing care to a senior in their own home or in their family's home costs taxpayers less than providing services in a long-term-care home.

Senior after senior after senior who I've met and continue to meet in my riding of Ottawa Centre tells me that they want to live in their home. They don't want to live anywhere but in their own home. They want help. They

want assistance in ensuring that they continue to live in a comfortable fashion.

I spoke about this proposed tax credit during the campaign again and again, and I always got very positive feedback from seniors, because they said, "This is tangible. This is real. This is going to really have an impact. I can see the result of this tax credit." We talk a lot about different kinds of tax credits, and they're somewhere out there; we just really don't know what it means because you don't see anything tangible in return. This is one of those tax credits where a senior sees a real benefit, because they will see an improvement in their bathroom. They will see how that bathroom has become accessible for them.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** People in Alexandria want it, too.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm sure people in Alexandria will definitely want this. People in Peterborough, I think, will be very supportive of this. I'm sure in every community across this province, all 107 ridings—I can assure you that if this legislation passes, you will see support by seniors, and you will see that the seniors will use it, because it's going to result in a better quality of life for them. It's going to ensure that they continue to live in their own home with dignity so that their grandkids can continue to visit them in their own home. It's something very, very important, something that I think we have spoken to seniors about again and again and something that I urge all members to support.

Regardless of how you look at the numbers, there is no doubt that Ontario's aging population will bring significant fiscal challenges. Ontario's senior population is expected to more than double over the next 25 years, from approximately 1.8 million seniors in 2010 to 4.1 million by 2036. That's a very significant increase in our senior population in the province of Ontario. By 2017, for the first time, seniors will account for a larger share of the population than children 14 and under.

Speaker, our government is well aware of this reality and will continue to work hard to ensure that Ontario's seniors have access to quality programs and services that enable them to live safe, healthy, independent lives. Premier McGuinty has summarized our goal best: "By helping seniors remain in their own home, we're helping elderly people today, and we're taking steps to deal with the aging of our population that's going to happen in the future. It's important that we begin preparing now so that we can ensure the baby boom generation are the healthiest, most active and most engaged generation of seniors in our history."

In addition, the reality is that offering affordable solutions and alternatives that help seniors to stay at home as long as possible frees up health resources for patients in other care settings. That's in large part why, in 2007, our government launched the Aging at Home strategy to promote the health of seniors by encouraging an independent lifestyle in their own homes. We have invested \$1.1 billion over four years in this strategy, with the goal of providing a continuum of community-based services for seniors and their caregivers to allow them to stay healthy and live independently and with dignity in their homes.



0940

I can give you example after example after example, Speaker, of how the Aging at Home strategy is working in my community. The one example I give you is that of a community called Rochester Towers, an Ottawa Community Housing tower. It's a seniors-only residence in my riding in Ottawa Centre. You've got a very mixed population, and this is what's so unique about Rochester Towers. You've got a community which is pretty much 50-50: 50% Chinese-speaking seniors and 50% non-Chinese-speaking seniors. I've been going to this building for years, before I even ran for office, and did a lot of community and voluntary work. I always found some challenges in that building. People were not happy. People felt unhappy. Always, you'd find an ambulance parked in front of the building.

We brought in Aging at Home. I think it was in about 2008-09 that we brought in Aging at Home in that building, providing services in the language that a senior speaks, so, English, French, Mandarin and Cantonese; four languages, because those were the four languages spoken by the seniors. Now you go into this building—every time I go there now, I have not seen an ambulance, number one, which is a big sign, because seniors are getting care right there in their building. Every time I go there, some sort of festivity, some event, be it Christmas, Chinese New Year, you name it, the Moon Festival, is being done. Seniors are singing; they're dancing. They're having English classes. All kinds of activities take place, and you can see a remarkable difference in their health and their positive attitude as they live in that building.

The other big difference I've seen is the relationship between those seniors who are of Chinese heritage and those who are not. In the past, they did not communicate with each other; in the past, they did not get along with each other. Now you see that they get along and they actually share each other's activities. So this is a great example. This is something that I'm very, very proud of and will continue to promote in my community.

Speaker, when our seniors get health supports in their communities, they can avoid unneeded hospital visits, as was the case in Rochester Towers in my riding of Ottawa Centre, and live more active and independent lives. The proposed new healthy homes renovation tax credit will build on this strategy.

I mentioned earlier that we have three important goals in introducing this new tax credit at this time. Not only will this proposed tax credit help seniors live longer in their own homes and relieve cost pressures on Ontario's health care system, but it will support jobs for businesses in the renovation sector. If passed by this Legislature, the tax credit is expected to support about \$800 million of home renovation activity and around 10,500 jobs throughout the Ontario economy each and every year. It would help build on the more than 128,000 net new jobs that have been created in Ontario so far in 2011 and on the almost half a million net new jobs—485,400, to be precise—that have been created in our province since October 2003.

Speaker, home renovations help create jobs while investing in the accessibility of existing homes for the future, and the home renovation sector is a valuable one. In the GTA alone, nearly \$10 billion has been spent on renovations this year. The proposed healthy homes renovation tax credit will provide a further boost to this sector of the economy. And because the proposed new credit would not be claimed without a proper receipt, it would help combat the underground economy. That's why I keep stressing that it's very important for seniors to keep their receipts in order to take advantage of this tax credit, if it's passed.

In conclusion, I urge the Legislature to support this bill for three important reasons: (1) to help seniors continue to live independently; (2) to relieve cost pressures on the health care system; and (3) to support jobs and Ontario's economy. I am confident that these goals are shared by each and every member in this House.

Speaker, over the last several years, Ontarians have made tremendous accomplishments by working together. In 2008, when the global economic turmoil first hit, the McGuinty government took early action to support those who needed help the most. In today's economic environment, we will continue to make smart, innovative investments to encourage economic growth and job creation.

The proposed new healthy homes renovation tax credit is only the latest example of the kind of innovative approach that has helped our province weather the recent global recession. That's why I'm asking for all members' support in passing this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much to the member for Ottawa Centre. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'd like to address the member's comments with regard to job creation as well as remind him that since the election, this province has lost 75,000 private sector jobs. That equates to 100 jobs per hour.

He also was talking about that the government will not take a slash-and-burn approach to the public sector. We want to suggest that the member and his government consider a public sector wage freeze.

My concern, when he talked about innovation, is the fact that past performance is in fact an indication of future performance: tax; spend.

He talked about the healthy home tax credit helping seniors, providing a \$1,500 tax rebate. The emphasis was continually on \$1,500. My concern is, in order to obtain that \$1,500, seniors must spend \$10,000. My math tells me: 15%. I understand that, but my concern, to the member, is that many seniors cannot afford \$10,000 in order to obtain a \$1,500 credit.

Don't get me wrong, Member. I am in favour of helping seniors, especially since one day I will be one. The reality is, though, very few can afford \$10,000 of spending in order to get a \$1,500 tax credit.

This won't create new jobs. In fact, it will only create new projects for existing companies who will receive those phone calls from seniors wanting work done.

In theory, the healthy home tax credit is a positive move in the right direction, but in reality it's a feel-good.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to say to the member—because it's a bit of a trend that we see developing around here in regard to the governing Liberals—that it would almost seem as if they didn't notice there was a thing called an election, because as I listen to the speeches, it's much the same as what we heard before the election, insofar that they're still on the same track but don't recognize that this in fact is a minority Parliament.

I would have hoped that somewhere within this speech, the member would have talked about how he is able to reach across the aisles and work with the opposition parties so that together we can build a tax credit that works for seniors. What I hear is much of the same. What I heard is that they've got all the ideas and they think they've got all the votes.

I don't want to say for one second that we're trying to be obstructionist here, because that's not the point. We very much want to work with this government in order to do the things that are right with the public, but it's got to be a two-way street. What I would hope to hear from members as we go forward in debates—this was the throne speech, but he used it, and rightfully so, because the rules allow it, to talk about the seniors' tax credit—is soliciting ideas from the opposition about how we can work this together.

I can tell you that we, as New Democrats, are interested in this idea; we think there's some value to it. We believe that there are some things that we might be able to do together with the Conservatives and the Liberals in order to make this a stronger program that doesn't necessarily cost more money but is more effective for the people that it's aimed to. Those are, I think, what we need to remember as we look forward to what this new Parliament is all about. It isn't business as usual. It isn't about a majority government on the other side, or a minor—what do they call it?—a major minority, as the Premier called it. This is a minority Parliament, and it means to say that all of us in this House are going to have to change the way that we do things. I, in the opposition, am going to have to change the way that I do things. I can't just criticize; I also have to propose, because that's the responsibility I've been given by virtue of the numbers in the House. The government, on the other side, has to listen and has to be willing to work with the opposition so that we do what we were charged to do, and that is to work for the people who sent us here.

0950

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. You're certainly looking resplendent this morning in your attire. I know you'll do a wonderful job in that position.

I did listen carefully to my colleagues the government House leader and the member from Ottawa Centre. This bill will go to committee, and we do look forward—for example, my good friend the member from Durham, who

has always been a strong advocate for seniors in his riding, will have some good ideas to possibly amend this bill. The previous speaker, the member from Timmins—James Bay, indicated that he'll have some ideas to amend this bill.

In my own riding of Peterborough, I had the opportunity to visit two businesses. I'd like to talk about Vance Robbins this morning. Vance coached my son, Braden, in baseball, and he's the owner of Anden bed and bath on Lansdowne Street West in Peterborough. He's really a good small business operator. He knows that since combining the two levels of tax reporting he's saving money, and he looks forward to the opportunity to sell the new walk-in baths and showers for seniors in my community.

Just last Saturday Karan and I had the opportunity to see our old friend Gus; Gus owns Gus's Kitchen and Bath on Erskine Avenue in Peterborough. I was in to see Gus—we're looking at buying a new sink and some other things. Karan recently got appointed as principal so she has a few extra bucks now, so there will be the opportunity to look at these things and do some renovations. But there was a senior that walked in to Gus's, and I could see that she had some mobility issues, and she was looking at the opportunity to buy one of these new walk-in showers. I said to her, "You should make that decision, because we're bringing in the new healthy homes renovation tax credit. It's retroactive to October 1, so this will be the opportunity to retrofit your home so you can stay in it longer."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I certainly will not be in a position to support the renovation tax credit. When you look at the math alone on this program, the percentage of people that it will affect is incredibly minute. When you look at the percentage of seniors in Ontario over the age of 65 and you look at the percentage of those needing accessibility installations in their homes and you remove the percentage of those who either cannot find the \$10,000 or would spend it either way, you're left with this tiny margin in the middle. That has to leave less than 1% of the population that will be affected versus HST-off-of-home-heating; that program is better for all Ontario families. There's no paperwork. It leaves money in their pocket immediately. The biggest threat to seniors is the soaring energy bill, thanks to things like the FIT program in Ontario and the green energy plan. The FIT program and the green energy plan have caused our hydro bills to soar; that is the real area in Ontario that needs to be fixed.

Our party has three priorities: We're looking for private sector job creation; we're looking to rein in government spending; and we're looking for relief for families. The HST-off-of-home-heating plan brings relief for families. That's the program that we will support because it recognizes not the slight wedge of less than 1% of the population; taking the HST off home heating brings relief to all families in Ontario, and that's why we will be supporting that program. That's why I cannot support the renovation tax credit that gets to so few people in Ontario.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I now return to the member for Ottawa Centre, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the members from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Timmins–James Bay, Peterborough and Nipissing for their comments.

Helping seniors is not a partisan issue. It is not an issue that divides on the lines of Liberals and Conservatives or New Democrats. It is not an issue that should be all divvied up into how the numbers of seats in this House will accomplish it. It is our duty and responsibility to help seniors.

I really hope that the comments of the member from Nipissing are not reflective of the views of all the members of the Conservative Party, because if that's the case, I think the seniors from the riding of Nipissing are being let down. But if all those members are against this tax credit for our seniors, they're all being let down, because it is our responsibility to ensure that we help seniors so they can continue to live in their homes.

You have heard this again and again and again: Seniors want to ensure that they have means to live in their own homes. They should not be living in an institution like a long-term-care facility. The only way we can ensure that, Speaker, is by supporting Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, which is going to be a real support, a real relief for seniors, not to mention the boost to the economy, because it is going to create jobs. I ask you to go ask the renovation sector their views about this bill, how it's going to help them go and work in a senior's home, install those devices so that seniors continue to live in their homes. That is the way. That's the smart policy that we need to support and I really hope, Speaker, that the Conservative Party is not aligned with the views of the member from Nipissing and that they will support this bill when it comes to the vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Thornhill has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. John Milloy:** No further business, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 0957 to 1030.*

and sisters Emily and Sarah Giesen. Please, everyone, wish them a warm welcome to the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, and welcome.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Speaker, the food and beverage processing industry is a major economic driver in our province. This morning, I am pleased to introduce Craig Richardson, the president of the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors—welcome, Craig—and Jane Graham, the executive director. Welcome, Jane.

Along with fellow representatives from the alliance, they will be meeting today with MPPs to talk about some of the major issues affecting the industry in Ontario, and I encourage all of my colleagues to attend the reception this evening and sample some of the wonderful food.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** This morning, I met with a number of people in the music industry. They are here today, and there will be a reception later on—two of them are in my riding: Graham Henderson, CEO, Music Canada; Steve Kane, CEO, Warner Music; Deane Cameron, CEO, EMI Music; Randy Lennox, CEO, Universal Music; and Shane Carter, CEO, Sony Music.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** The guests from Music Canada have not arrived yet, but I still want to introduce them; Steve Kane from Warner Music Canada Co.; Deane Cameron, EMI Music Canada; Randy Lennox, Universal Music Canada Inc.; Shane Carter, Sony Music Entertainment Canada Inc.; Graham Henderson and Amy Terrill, Music Canada; and Erika Mozes from Crestview.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions? There being none, it's now time for oral questions.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I would like to draw your attention to, I think, a violation of standing order 19 of this House: "Except as provided in standing order 107, no member of the House shall bring any stranger into any part of the House appropriated to the members of the House while the House, or the Committee of the Whole House, is meeting." Today we have the Premier here, which is obviously a stranger to the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** First of all, that is not appropriate, and the member does know better and I would expect it not to happen again. Furthermore, I would hope that is not setting the tone for the question period.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No other comments are necessary, thank you.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I would like to introduce today some very special guests, the family of page Theodore Giesen: his mother, Jennifer; father, George;

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, sadly, your so-called jobs plan has been a failure. We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs; we've

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

lost 75,000 full-time private sector jobs since the last election alone.

The Ontario PC caucus has brought forward a good idea to create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades, jobs for aspiring electricians, carpenters, welders and HVAC operators. Premier, will you support our plan to modernize our apprenticeship system and open up 200,000 good jobs for skilled tradesmen in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, first of all I want to thank the honourable member for his question.

I just want to introduce a little bit of clarity with respect to where we are in terms of jobs. Ontario has created 267,000 new jobs since the recession. Overwhelmingly, those jobs are full-time, and furthermore, overwhelmingly those full-time jobs pay more than the average Ontario wage. So in fact, we are moving in the right direction.

I had the opportunity to speak in person with my honourable colleague about where we're going on trades. I remain open to any proposals that he might want to put forward in this regard. But I do want to say that I think we have some common ground in terms of ensuring that young people and families in Ontario see trades as a real and viable opportunity. They are an important part of our plan to increase the level of post-secondary education for all our students.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, the problem, Premier, is that too many young people see the trades as a real and viable opportunity in Alberta, in Saskatchewan, in Manitoba and in British Columbia. The Premier knows full well that seven other provinces have modernized their apprenticeship system. They have lower ratios of journeymen to apprentices than the province of Ontario does. You seem to embrace a 1970s-era system, Premier.

So you say you're open to ideas. Then let me ask you directly: Will you support our call and the call of the apprentices joining us here today to move to a one-to-one ratio and create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I've heard my honourable colleague on this before. He will know that we have changed ratios, as a government, eight times so far. They didn't change them once when they were in government.

But we're actually trying to move beyond that, so we've created a new College of Trades. What I wanted to do is a couple of things: first of all, inspire confidence in families and young people that trades are a real, viable option for them, and secondly, I want the college to take on that responsibility and to establish those ratios. I want the college for apprentices to take on the same kinds of responsibilities that the colleges for doctors, teachers, architects, lawyers and the like do.

So our preference is to turn this over to a thoughtful college that takes on that responsibility to decide specifically on the ratios that are appropriate for the industry here in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Come on, Premier. I mean, nobody really believes that. Basically, your College of Trades, five out of the eight potential members of the board are union bosses or former union bosses. It hands over these decisions to the special interests.

Quite frankly, Premier, this is a gross abdication of a responsibility that the Premier of the province should have: to actually take our system out of the 1970s and bring it into the 21st century, to move to a one-to-one ratio like seven other provinces that have moved in that direction and to actually create 200,000 jobs for young people who want to be electricians, who want to be plumbers, who want to be HVAC operators and who want to be welders in the province of Ontario.

Premier, will you at least say that you support the notion of modernizing our system and moving to a one-to-one ratio, just like they have in other provinces?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I'm putting my faith in the college, and I would recommend to my honourable colleague that he do the same. I know he's quick to dismiss it as being unworthy of public confidence, but I don't see it that way.

The college is made up of trade boards. Those trade boards are composed of equal numbers of members selected as employee representatives and an employer. They're also made up of divisional boards. The divisional board is made up of two employers and two employees. And then there's a board of governors, which is made up of 21 members, 16 of those coming from the divisional boards, which are, again, equally made up.

So we've worked really hard to ensure that the new college is, in fact, fair and objective when it comes to the decision-making that they're going to undertake, including the decision with respect to ratios. I'd ask my honourable colleague to give the college a chance—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

1040

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Premier, nobody believes that. The employer groups, for example, the Heavy Construction Association of Toronto, Merit Ontario, the Ontario Electrical League, the Ontario General Contractors Association, the Ontario Road Builders' Association, the sewer and water main association, Progressive Contractors, residential contractor councils—all of these employer groups who want to hire the young people who have joined us in the assembly today—see your College of Trades as blocking job creation. They oppose your College of Trades. Nobody actually believes you.

Well, I guess one person, Pat Dillon, the head of the Working Families Coalition, likes this College of Trades. He can pull the strings. But you stand with Pat Dillon; we stand with the young people. We stand with the people who want to get jobs in the trades. We want to stand with the young electricians.



Premier, if employers don't have any faith in your College of Trades, why should young people who are looking to put their skills to work in the province of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the only person that can't—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Minister?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It takes a certain amount of gall for the Leader of the Opposition, who in years one, two and three of the Conservative government gutted the system, cut apprenticeship funding by 74%—the reason we have deficits today is because the previous government left it in rack and ruin.

We have a fair and balanced system. I've been out across the province meeting with business leaders and labour leaders. I've met with the College of Trades. The Leader of the Opposition should consider that business people there are concerned about—what they don't want is what they're proposing. They don't want government micromanaging the trades. We're asking industry, labour and colleges to be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Ironically, when this minister was the mayor of Winnipeg, in Manitoba, in the time period he references, do you know what the ratio was in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker? One to one. So it's the old goose and gander.

Seven provinces have modernized their systems. They have created jobs for young people, jobs for those who are retraining. I asked the apprentices here today how many of them have seen their friends hightail it out to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC to get jobs in the trades. Everyone raised their hands.

I ask the minister to look behind me, look above me at the 50 or so young people who want to be apprentices in the province of Ontario. Look them in the eye and tell them that you oppose a one-to-one ratio that will give them job opportunities in the province of Ontario. Can you do that?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I don't know how simplistic the leader of the official opposition can be. We have over 150 trades in Ontario. Each of them has different ratio requirements. The business leaders, the educators, the labourers and the people in the trades themselves do not want a one-size-fits-all because the trades are radically different. Small businesses need different things from that.

It is the Leader of the Opposition who should look up into the galleries and explain why we're committed—right now, 120,000 people are in apprenticeships. When you were in government, your performance was less than

50% of that. All the talk and the rhetoric is lovely, but you couldn't bake the bread. You—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The minister's argument holds no water. In the other provinces, in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, they have electricians, they have plumbers, they have welders, and they have HVAC operators. They have those trades. Correct me if I'm wrong, but they've moved to modernize their system; they've moved to one-to-one ratios. And, Minister, you're absolutely darn right: I'll look these folks in the eye like you did earlier today to say I'm going to fight for them. I'm going to fight for them each and every day. I want to see that talent here in the province of Ontario. I want to see those 200,000 jobs.

So I ask the member who spent time in Manitoba and saw this work; I ask the minister: If it's good enough for seven other provinces, why are you stuck in the 1970s and telling these young people to head out west to find a good job? I want to see them here in Ontario.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** You know, Mr. Speaker, when I was mayor of Winnipeg—and to this day, if you talk to my predecessor, you'll find the flow of talent isn't that way; it's this way, quite frankly.

Second of all, 28,000 apprenticeships: That's twice as many people today getting into apprenticeships as when you were in government—two to one. The College of Trades is going to increase that. We are looking at three to one over your record, or four to one. But this is typical: There isn't a plan. You basically couldn't string two sentences together.

I have got two reports—the Whitaker report. Why don't you read it? You know, literacy is a good thing. Read the Whitaker report and read the Thomson report. There are three years of research working with business, labour and colleges to design a system that is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Two years ago, with much, much fanfare, the government released a report claiming that corporate tax cuts and the HST were going to create 591,000 jobs. So my question to the Premier is: It's been two years; can he provide a progress report for us on that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Well, Speaker, you know, I'm pleased to take the question from my honourable colleague the leader of the third party. I said just a moment ago that we have created 267,000 new jobs since the recession—more than half the new jobs in Canada.

I would also draw my honourable colleague's attention to a couple of independent assessments of our competitiveness at this point in our history. Foreign Direct Investment, a very reputable authority in the UK, has said that we are now the second most preferred

destination for foreign investment in all of North America, after California. Furthermore, just a couple of months ago now, *Forbes* magazine in the US, a very prestigious business magazine, said that Canada has now become the preferred destination in the world for foreign investment, and the number one reason for that change—we jumped from fifth spot to first spot—is because of the tax reforms that we made in Ontario. So, Speaker, I say to my honourable colleague, they are in fact working.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, in July 2010 the government started slashing corporate tax rates and hit families with the HST, but employment levels since that time really have not changed all that much. Most jobs, in fact, that were created were created before the HST was implemented. On top of that, the fall economic statement revises employment projections down by as much as 40%. Does the Premier really think his plan is working?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, my honourable colleague will know that there is global economic uncertainty, and that it is centred in Europe, the world's largest trading bloc, and the United States, the world's largest economy. Of course, the consequences of that are being felt by us here in Ontario. It is slowing down the rate at which we grow our economy and it is making it more difficult for us to create jobs.

In addition to our tax reforms and our continuing investment in developing the skills of our workforce, just yesterday in London, together with the Minister of Energy, we announced our new southwestern Ontario development fund. I'm asking my honourable colleague to support that. It's a proven winner. We've tested this in eastern Ontario. If \$50 million would generate close to half a billion dollars in private sector investment and some 12,000 jobs, we want to do the same for southwestern Ontario and I ask my colleague to support that measure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, for two years the government has insisted that corporate tax giveaways and unfair sales tax were going to create jobs, and for two years we've seen exactly the opposite happening in this province. Now, when the government is considering reckless cuts to balance the books, why won't the Premier instead put the brakes on reckless tax giveaways and start looking at tax credits that actually help the companies that are creating jobs?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'm pleased to engage my honourable colleague in this debate, and I know that we will over the course of time and leading up to the budget. But there is a practical, pragmatic provision and initiative that we have just introduced.

We want to do something that is specific to southwestern Ontario. It's the creation of a new development fund. It's modeled on the fund that we put in place in eastern Ontario. On the basis of that experience, Speaker,

we found that about 50 million tax dollars have leveraged about a half a billion dollars in private sector investment and created about 12,000 jobs. We want to use that as a model and create something very similar to benefit southwestern Ontario. I'm going to need my colleague's support in order to pursue that initiative and I ask her for that support.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my next question is also to the Premier. Yesterday, your Minister of Economic Development shrugged off a growing list of companies that have taken public money but haven't followed through on job creation. He said, "[T]he majority of those companies create jobs."

Does the Premier agree with his minister's new standard that as long as some companies are creating jobs, the rest can take the money and run?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'm not prepared to accept that as in fact what the minister is saying. But I can say that we're not prepared to throw up our hands and allow the evolution of globalization to play itself out unhindered in the province of Ontario.

One of the things that we have learned in our travels abroad is that those jurisdictions which are most successful and most competitive are those where people have come together—and that is the private sector, labour and government—and put their shoulders collectively to the wheel in a strategic and intelligent way. So that's what we're doing here in Ontario.

For example, in our Green Energy Act, that is something that we are doing together in the province of Ontario. We have decided that there is an exciting opportunity. We're working hard together to pursue that. So far we've created 20,000 jobs. We are clearly the leader in North America when it comes to pursuing clean energy technology, and that's a good example of government and people working together to pursue an exciting opportunity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Leader, supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, no company should be able to take public money and then leave its employees high and dry. Last summer, the province promised a \$2.5-million grant to St. Catharines-based Silicon Knights, and they said that they would create around 90 jobs and sustain another 100 jobs. But Speaker, this company is cutting its workforce down to 35 people.

Now, I want to know from the Premier if this government is planning on moving ahead with these grants and, if so, are there going to be job guarantees that are part of that contract?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I want to assure my honourable colleague that we are looking at this very closely. There was one instalment of funds provided, but we're now obviously in discussions before any further money flows.



But I just want to let her know about a place that I visited yesterday. It's called Digital Extremes. They're in London. They're in the same line of work, computer games, Speaker. We gave them two and a half million dollars and we asked that they meet a certain job target within five years. They met it in six months, Speaker. They've grown by 70% in the last 18 months. I know my colleagues opposite would be especially interested in learning that 22% of their growing workforce comes from outside the province. In fact, I met a young woman there who is from Scotland, who found out about this business here and came to work there.

So I want to assure my honourable colleague that we're being very careful in terms of how we provide this kind of support—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the province patted itself on the back for a series of multi-million-dollar grants to Global Sticks in Thunder Bay. That company closed its doors last week, although they claim that they can reopen again if they get another \$2 million from the province.

The question is this: What kind of job guarantees did the government extract when it handed that company millions of dollars?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** In all of these investments, Mr. Speaker, there are accountability mechanisms where dollars are often clawed back when these companies go through difficult circumstances. I think, though, what Ontario workers want to know is, is the leader of the NDP suggesting we shouldn't be making these investments? There's always going to be an element of risk when these investments are made.

We're dealing with the private sector during tough global economic times. Is she opposed to the \$8.6 billion we've leveraged overall from these economic development initiatives? Is she opposed to the 12,100 new jobs that have been created as a result of these investments or the 19,300 jobs that have been protected as a result of these investments?

Mr. Speaker, I think that's what Ontario workers need to know.

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question today is for the Premier. If you look in the gallery today, you will see students from the CLAC pre-apprenticeship training facility in Cambridge and the Pre-Apprenticeship Training Institute in Toronto. Welcome, guys and girls.

They came here today because your refusal to modernize our apprenticeship system means that when they graduate, they can't get a job. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 37% of Ontario's small businesses say that a shortage of skilled labour is

the main constraint on growing their business. The students here today have those skills.

The Ontario PC caucus has the plan to put them to work and create skilled trades for Ontario's future. Why are you standing in their way?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I think we want to acknowledge first, Mr. Speaker, the incredible effort that these students are involved in, pursuing a critical series of opportunities in the private sector, and we want to commend them for that.

But you know, actions are more important than words. Right now, there are 120,000 people just like them in Ontario pursuing trades. That's twice as many as under the party opposite when it was in government, when there were only 60,000 people.

I want to acknowledge that we're not doing enough yet, even though we're doing twice as well as the previous government. They should also take the time, because they're students, to read the Thomson report and the Whitaker report, and they'll understand therein what has been—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Minister, by the time question period ends today, Ontario will have lost another 100 jobs. Ontario is facing a jobs crisis. The time for action, we believe, is now. We've already wasted 54 days without a single new idea coming from this party.

The Ontario PC caucus has put a good idea on the table, creating 200,000 skilled trade jobs by modernizing our apprenticeship system. If you are really serious about your pledge to work together with the opposition to create good private sector jobs, why are you standing in the way of creating these jobs?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We're doing a lot of other things to support these students. We have the most generous tax credits in Canada right now to assist employers in hiring apprentices.

Not only did the party opposite in power cut within the first three years apprenticeship funding by 74%, and people like those in the gallery were thrown out of opportunities, they also raised tuition by 67% and cut half a billion dollars from training, colleges and universities—the biggest cuts. You delivered less opportunities and diminished opportunities.

Right now in this recession, it is our economy in North America that's attracting more capital. It is our economy that is building jobs. The opposition can only count jobs lost; they're not counting jobs created.

Through the College of Trades, Mr. Speaker—unlike the party there, we don't believe government knows anything. So we've—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question?

1100

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Speaker, this question is to the Minister of the Environment. Ontarians want the government to protect—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member from Pembroke will come to order—the second time, please.

Member?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Thank you.

Ontarians want the government to protect our lakes, our rivers and air, but today the Environmental Commissioner reports that the Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources face a crisis of capacity. While they've been given more responsibility to deal with increasing threats to the environment, their budgets have been cut by 45% and 22% respectively since the 1990s.

Will the McGuinty government heed the commissioner's call to rebuild these ministries or will a clean environment be another casualty of upcoming cuts?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, I know that the member probably forgot to mention this, and I forgive him for it, but he will be aware that since our government took office we have in fact increased the Ministry of the Environment budget by some 42%.

I welcome the report of the Environmental Commissioner. It's excellent. As the new minister, I have an opportunity to look at all of his recommendations. I have a great deal of respect for the commissioner.

I know that you forgot, as well, to mention some of the good things that he said about the government of Ontario. I forgive you. He said that he commends MOE for developing a source protection strategy. He says that the ministry has built early, multi-stage notice and consultation into the source protection planning process. He lauds the ministry on its new publicly accessible approvals database. He says that we're developing new, more stringent limits—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Mr. Speaker, to the environment minister: The Environmental Commissioner said there is a "culture of inaction and procrastination" on issues like climate change and waste diversion. The Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources simply are not able to properly monitor and enforce landfilling, incineration, waste hauling and other polluting activities.

Will the minister assure Ontarians that the capacity of these ministries will not be further undermined by upcoming cuts, or is the environment one of the areas slated for a 30% slash in funding?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I should mention, as well—I forgot to mention this—that the Ministry of the Environment, since our government took office, has hired some 39 new water inspectors.

I want to tell the member that if you're looking at initiatives that are extremely important for the environment, you know that despite the fact that some of your members were unfortunately opposed to this, we are eliminating the use of coal for the production of electrical power in the province of Ontario. The former member for Kenora–Rainy River will be listening to this, I know, at this particular point in time.

We have also developed the green energy plan, which is accentuating the need for and the implementation of more benign ways of producing electrical power in this province of Ontario. We have the source protection act, which we're being lauded for internationally, and I want to commend our people in our homes who are using that blue box program in a very exemplary manner.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker. This question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Minister, people in western Mississauga neighbourhoods such as Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville understand the importance of our publicly funded universal health care system. As originally conceived, health care funding was a shared responsibility with the federal government. The province and the federal government each paid 50% of health care costs. Today, the federal government pays only 23% of our health care funding. That's less than a quarter.

Minister, please tell us what Ontario is doing to stand up for our health care system and ensure its sustainability for future generations.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for this very important question. Ontarians have tasked this government with the challenge of making sure that our health care system is strong for generations to come.

Ontarians realize that they need strong leadership, leadership that will stand up to the federal government on behalf of the people who need health care, so our government is pressing for a new 10-year health accord with the federal government that will establish priorities, accountability and clear goals. We are working with the other provinces to make that a reality, and we're pushing the federal government to commit to an accord that goes well beyond the two years that they have already committed to.

This long-term health accord is important not just for the people of Ontario but for the people across this country.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Well, thank you very much, Minister. We have an aging population here in Ontario, and seniors are making up an increasing proportion of our total population across Canada. For every senior alive today, there will be two seniors when most of the baby boom generation are ourselves seniors.



*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

I've already mentioned to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke about the inside voice. I am now saying it must be.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you, Speaker.

Minister, I'm sure some of the discussions on renewing the health accord have focused on meeting the needs of our growing senior population and a new 10-year health accord with the government of Canada. I know Ontario is also seeking health care reforms designed to meet the needs of our seniors.

Will the minister please tell the House what our province is doing to help Ontario's senior population?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, there is no question that all provinces and territories need to work together to make sure that we're giving seniors the best possible care and options that allow them to stay in their own homes as long as possible.

The seniors I talk to tell me that, given a choice, home is where they want to be—in their neighbourhoods and in their communities. I'm proud to talk about a program called Home First, which is having a remarkable impact on the ability of seniors to come back home. When seniors are in hospital, what used to happen is that often they would be on track to go into long-term care. Now, under Home First, they're coming home. They're getting intensive supports to keep them in their own homes. What we're finding is that people are actually getting healthier, and they are certainly happier being in their own home.

So that's what this government is doing, and I'd ask the members from the opposite parties to join us—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier: 11 days ago, the Toronto Star again revealed that physical, emotional and sexual abuse remains rampant throughout Ontario nursing homes. Your government had an opportunity to address this issue one year ago following a similar report when I introduced a motion at the social policy committee calling for an immediate investigation into living conditions in nursing homes. However, your Liberal members on the committee defeated the motion and blocked the investigation.

Why has it taken your government more than a year and yet another front-page Toronto Star story detailing shocking abuse before you finally agreed to an investigation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, there is absolutely no question that when people go into long-term care, they should be entitled to—their loved ones should have confidence that they will receive the best possible care and certainly not be subject to any form of abuse.

We have come a long, long way in the eight years that we have been in government, and I think you may recall—I'm sure members in this House recall—that then-parliamentary assistant Monique Smith travelled the province and investigated problems within our long-term-care homes. As a result, we have made significant improvements to care in long-term care. We have new legislation. We have new inspection processes. And it is as a result of that change that these incidents are now coming to light.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, again, through you to the minister: Minister, your government was made aware of the issue one year ago. Your committee members voted down an investigation at that time.

In 2003, the former Minister of Health wept copiously over photos showing abuse. He promised a revolution in nursing care and that he would fix it. Now, the current minister has promised to fix it following yet another front-page Toronto Star story.

1110

I ask you, Minister: In order to ensure and restore confidence, in order to ensure high quality and transparency of care as well as a safe environment for our seniors in nursing homes, the task force work must begin immediately. Can you tell this House when it will begin and when the recommendations will come back to this House for action?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, when I read the stories in the Toronto Star that the member opposite is referring to, I did call, immediately, a summit meeting of different people who have an interest in long-term care. They came with the idea that they establish a task force. That work is under way now.

I do want to say, Speaker, that what is really important is that there is a culture change in long-term care and that there needs to be a culture change so that anyone who suspects abuse of any type should report that immediately. And I am just going to use this opportunity to tell the people of Ontario that if ever they suspect abuse in long-term care, please call the long-term-care action line: 1-866-876-7658. Call immediately. We need to know when abuse is taking place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### YOUTH SERVICES

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

The government of Ontario is the primary parent for over 8,000 children in Ontario. Over the last two Fridays, a group of these youths organized hearings here at Queen's Park to share their experiences. I listened to their heartbreaks, their dreams and recommendations. Like all young people, they just want to succeed, but right now, extended care management is the only system of support available to them, and it cuts them off at the age of 21.

Will the Minister of Children and Youth listen to our children and finally modernize extended care maintenance?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, thank you. First I'd like to congratulate the member from Hamilton Mountain on her election, and also being appointed critic to this important ministry.

I want to say that absolutely, I am prepared to listen to this community of young people. In fact, I was proud—quite humbled, to be honest—to attend both days of hearings here at Queen's Park, last Friday and the Friday before. And I have to tell you that the presentations by these youth—and in fact the hearings themselves, of course, although catalyzed by the provincial advocate, an advocate that we appointed and made independent—were in fact organized by youth in care and youth who had recently come out of care as crown wards and former crown wards. The presentations and the stories that I heard were both heartbreaking, in many cases, but also incredibly inspiring.

I look forward to the report coming out in the spring.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Last May, Ontario New Democrats proposed extending the age of support to the kids in care from 21 to 25. This would allow these young people to finish post-secondary education, enter the workplace, find stability and break the cycle of dependency. For years, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, the youth themselves, children's aid and child welfare agencies have all recommended extending this support, yet the McGuinty Liberals have ignored these proposals.

Speaker, will the minister finally do the right thing, work with the NDP and ensure that the youth in care have the tools they need to succeed?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, first of all, that I am very much looking forward to working closely with my critic from the third party, and I look forward to getting good ideas in terms of how we can further reduce the challenges that our crown wards and those exiting care face. I was certainly inspired by these extremely courageous and brave individuals.

But I also want to say that we have made historic improvements and quite remarkable changes very recently with the Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act which, as the member opposite knows, was proclaimed this past September and, along with other reforms, makes it easier for prospective parents to adopt these individuals. They also allow wards who exit the system voluntarily at age 16 or 17 to return to the children's aid society. This is a new change that we implemented—to be eligible for financial and other supports until the age of 21, including the important extended care maintenance support.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** My question today is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. My riding of Scarborough Southwest is a diverse riding made

up of many different income brackets, including lower-income tenants who pay rent. Given the current economic times we're living in, many tenants are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet.

I believe very strongly in making sure Ontarians have access to safe, affordable housing. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that tenants in Ontario do not suffer from unjustified rent increases like the ones we had in the 1990s under both PC and NDP governments.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: How is this government protecting tenants in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank the member for the question and for his work with tenants in Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Speaker, since we were elected in 2003, we have shown a very strong commitment to protecting tenants across Ontario. In fact, our government made changes to the way rental increases are calculated when we re-instituted real rent control after years of policies that were hurting tenants. We established strong rent controls to keep rents affordable for tenants.

Our rent increase guideline is based on the Ontario consumer price index for all goods and services, and it's averaged over the 12-month period ending in May of the previous year. As a result, our government has afforded tenants across the province the lowest year-over-year increases of any government in recent memory. Our average year-over-year has been 1.9%. The PC Party: When they were in office, their average year-over-year was 2.9%. The NDP: When they were in office, the year-over-year average was 4.8%.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm happy to hear about this government's commitment to controlling the rate of rent increase year over year. If there are further questions, tenants can contact the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Having said that, I know that in 2012 the guideline increase is set at 3.1%. Minister, I fear this amount is quite high, especially for the most vulnerable among us. Given our incredible record of preventing out-of-control annual rent increases, I am hopeful that this government will once again show true leadership and ensure that future increases at this level can be avoided.

Mr. Speaker, again, through you to the minister: What could be done to make sure rents stay affordable for Ontario families?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank the member for his concern, and I know it's shared by everyone in the province. All of the members heard from constituents that, yes, the rent increase guideline for the next year is 0.7%, but the next year is 3.1%—let me correct that: The rent increase for this year was 0.7%, and for next year it's 3.1%.

I think that the legislation, as it's written, worked well in a pre-recession period. As I said, we've had the lowest year-over-year average of any government. But I think what we need to recognize is that that process reflects the changes in the economy today.



I think it's time that we have to revisit the legislation so that the future increases are in line with what's actually happening in people's day-to-day lives, in the real world for tenants.

I look forward to hearing constructive suggestions and comments from all sides of the House on this topic. In the meantime, we're going to move ahead to address this important issue for—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, my question is for the Premier. During this past election, a number of Liberal members made statements that your government intends to stop the Highland Companies from opening a quarry in Melancthon township.

Can the Premier please explain how you plan to prevent this quarry from being approved?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, our government believes that it's critical to manage the resources of the province in an appropriate fashion.

The Highland quarry is currently being put through an environmental assessment. I recognize that that is somewhat unusual in the private sector. I can't recall any of the previous governments doing this. I'm not being critical of them; I don't recall them doing it.

1120

But this is going through a full environmental assessment. It's designated, even as a private sector initiative, for that full environmental assessment. That means, first of all, that they would have to justify the need. Second, they would have to look at all aspects of the proposal that's put forward. It allows for maximum input from the people from the area.

I want to commend all of my colleagues in the Legislature who have felt that this is most appropriate to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Oh, Speaker, many, many words; not a lot of action.

The Highland Companies, in fact, will submit what they want the terms of reference to be for the environmental assessment, and no EA has begun. The public wants to be part of that process, needs that consultation. The people are rightfully concerned that the water resources and the water tables will be affected because of this application.

Minister, we are looking for assurances. We need assurances from you that this application will go under a full environmental assessment that includes public consultation. Can you commit today to involving the public in the terms of reference and set that as part of your environmental assessment review?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to repeat to the member that I know this is unusual. In the past, it was not

done. When there was a request from time to time for private sector designation, that was resisted by previous governments. Our government has, in fact, indicated that it will engage in a full environmental assessment. That commitment has been given. When the assessment commences, we'll be seeking information on all aspects of this from the public. Many of my colleagues have asked for this.

We recognize that for a number of years in the province of Ontario, you simply bulldozed through the proposals that were there, and there was no environmental assessment designation. We have committed to that and a full public consultation. We invite the public to make its representations.

Unlike what used to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Cliffs Natural Resources in northern Ontario's Ring of Fire have said that they want to ship chromite overseas to refineries. Will the government allow our natural resources to be shipped to China when they should be processed here in Ontario, providing work for Ontario workers?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The Cliffs project provides an opportunity for incredible job creation not only in northern Ontario but across Ontario. The potential of mining chromite is enormous.

We on this side of the House want to ensure that that development moves very, very smoothly and moves very, very quickly, because the economic impact is immense. It's immense not only for residents of Ontario; it's immense for the definition of Ontario as the leading mining jurisdiction across the world.

We will ensure that we get the process correct. We will engage our First Nations communities. We will ensure that we engage the mining communities, that we engage industry. We will ensure that we maximize the potential of job creation for Ontario with the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Premier said that he is committed to leading-edge jobs in the Ring of Fire; that's what the Premier said. Processing chromite for the Ring of Fire would create good-paying, value-added jobs in northern Ontario.

It's time for the Premier to stand up for those leading-edge jobs for northerners. Is the Premier going to allow good, leading-edge processing jobs to leave Ontario or not?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Let me reinforce what I said. I'm glad that the leader of the third party understands the importance of this, because what we won't do is what the NDP would do. They would build walls around Ontario.

They would ensure that people like workers in northern Ontario at the Xstrata smelting and processing plant would lose jobs, with their philosophy and their policy.

We're not going to do that. We're going to ensure that we maximize the potential of the Ring of Fire. We're going to ensure that we maximize the job creation for northern Ontarians and all Ontarians. We're going to ensure that we maximize the definition of Ontario, because our priority is job creation, protection of health care and education.

## TOURISM

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Minister, a Statistics Canada report indicates international border crossing was down 0.1% in September and was down 2.1% from January to September compared to the year before.

As the member representing Windsor West, home of the busiest international crossing, these numbers are of particular concern to me, as it has a direct impact on our community. At such a volatile state of our economic recovery, we cannot afford for one of our economic drivers to slow down. We need to ensure that an industry which supports over 330,000 jobs annually thrives.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What are you and this government doing to encourage and attract visitors from other countries around the world?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Speaker, first and foremost, congratulations on your election. As well, I want to congratulate the honourable member from Windsor West on her election.

Speaker, the guests from Music Canada who I introduced earlier have arrived; they're over there. Welcome.

Our government is committed to promoting tourism and supporting the sector. The reason is quite simple: because we understand that tourism brings investments and creates jobs. This is why, since 2003, we have invested \$830 million in our tourism agencies to make Ontario a premier tourism destination.

Our plan is quite simple: Over the next several years the international spotlight will be on Ontario as we host the 2012 NHL All-Star Game, World Pride in 2014—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Again, my question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Minister, small businesses are the lifeline of Ontario's economy, especially in a city like Windsor. Hundreds of our local restaurants and small businesses rely on the revenue from our tourists.

With the current passport requirements and our dollar near parity, it is increasingly more difficult for our neighbours from the south to pay us a visit. Generally, we see a traffic flow of 13,000 vehicles travel through the Detroit-Windsor tunnel daily, and we want to ensure that the number keeps increasing.

Speaker, again, through you to the minister: What is your plan to help tourism-related businesses in Windsor and across Ontario prosper as we recover from these tough economic times?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** We have a clear plan to build on the strength of the tourism industry in Ontario. Yes, the US border crossings are down, but overseas visits are up. Allow me to give you some examples here. During the first nine months of 2011, visits from India were up 11%, from Brazil, up 8%; visits from China were up—not 4%, not 14%, but a whopping and fantastic 41%. We only expect these numbers to keep increasing. For example, we expect visitors from China to grow to about 200,000 by 2014.

We will continue our efforts in the US market and, at the same time, strengthen our efforts in attracting overseas tourists.

## RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the minister responsible for the alcohol and gaming corporation. We have a job crisis here in Ontario, and last week your heavy-handed regulations forced the shutdown on an innovative home delivery partnership between Beau's brewery and Operation Come Home in eastern Ontario. Your heavy-handedness cost jobs and fundraising opportunities for homeless youth. Your own members have called for your government to cut the red tape that excludes Ontario microbreweries from offering home delivery of their products.

Will you do the right thing? Will you restore common sense and will you scrap that archaic law that killed jobs for Ottawa's homeless?

1130

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Speaker. First of all, let me congratulate you on your re-election as well. And I'd like to also congratulate the member from Ottawa South and the member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who have been very proactive in this particular situation. If it hadn't been for them, Speaker, this issue would not have come to the foreground.

Yes, we are dealing with it and we are working out the situation as quickly as possible, because we think it's the right thing to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Well, "as quickly as possible" is not right now.

The minister himself is from eastern Ontario, and I can see the headlines in the Ottawa Citizen tomorrow if he does the right thing: "Local Boy Does Good."

But let's give them the go-ahead today. Let's get them back and running so that we can get the jobs back. You're in charge; you just have to tell your staff over here to let the bureaucrats know that the change is coming so that we can get that program up and running again. Why the delay?



I want to know, will you instruct your officials to do just that, change the archaic law that is preventing Operation Come Home and Beau's from getting the job done today? You can be the Christmas hero in Ottawa if you just say, "Yes, we'll do it today. We'll save this eastern Ontario operation."

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'm flattered that that member would think that I could be a Christmas hero to her.

We are working on the situation as we speak and we hope to have it resolved as soon as possible. We know this is a great charity, we know this is a great brewery as well, and we want to make sure that we—you know, you may just want to remember that it was your government that put in this law many, many years ago.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Yes, yes.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** And it will be our government, Speaker, within about 48 or 72 hours of finding out about the situation, that is going to correct something that they created many, many years ago.

## CONSERVATION

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. In September, the former minister from Hamilton Mountain again said that the ecologically sensitive Eramosa karst feeder lands would likely be donated or transferred, for a nominal fee, to the Hamilton Conservation Authority. The main Eramosa karst lands, a rare geological formation of caves and sinkholes, were transferred to the Hamilton Conservation Authority for a nominal fee of \$2.

Can this minister tell us why the Eramosa karst feeder lands have not yet been transferred to the Hamilton Conservation Authority for a similar nominal fee?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Thank you very much for the question. Certainly I was very active on the file and was very pleased to be able to meet the needs and the requests of the Hamilton area with respect to this very important, sensitive land.

On the other hand, I am not current on the issue right now, and I will undertake to look into it for him to see whether or not our commitments are met or are not being met. I will also, incidentally, be very pleased to meet with the member to discuss this privately.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that.

Speaker, in September, the Ontario Realty Corp. told the Hamilton Conservation Authority to buy the feeder lands, which provide water to the delicate limestone karst, at market value, which works out to be approximately \$800,000.

Can the minister tell us when and why this government made the change from a nominal fee to market value? Why has it taken so long to let the public know of this drastic, impossible new demand, and when will the

feeder lands be transferred for a true nominal fee, like the government promised?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The supplementary I'll refer to the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, this is an exceedingly important question that the member asks, and I want to assure him that the Ministry of the Environment has the greatest interest in the question that he directed to me.

I have been in conversation with the Minister of Infrastructure, and I'm sure, as we continue to deliberate on this matter, we will be able to find a resolution which will be pleasing to the people of Hamilton.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I was remiss in my duties. I would wish the members to greet my guests from Brant: Tracy Kadish, Lorne Kadish and Avery Kadish. Thank you for joining us today in the House.

## USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I listened carefully today. Thank you for admonishing me; that gave me the opportunity to listen carefully, as you have told me, to the responses from the other side and also the questions from the other side. I refer today to standing order 37(a), where it explicitly says that "the Speaker shall disallow any question which he or she does not consider urgent or of public importance."

I listened to a number of those questions, which were nothing more than opportunities for the government to tout what they believe to be a positive spin on their record. I question, Mr. Speaker, whether that is of urgent or public importance and whether that kind of question should be allowed in the limited time that we have here each day, as members in the Legislature, of one hour for question period.

I recognize that you're only here for the first week and you may want to refer to this and make some changes, if possible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member would be pleased to know that I was listening to the questions. I listened to all the questions, and I did not find that particular order to be in line with what you're asking. I thank you for your point of order.

I declare this House to be in recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature today to welcome presidents and board chairs from Ontario's colleges. They've joined us all today for meetings throughout the afternoon, and they're having a

reception this evening in room 228-230, starting at 5 p.m. It would be excellent if all members could attend that reception, Speaker.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to recognize the important role that colleges play in our province, strengthening the economy and helping people find lasting, meaningful employment. At a time when post-secondary education and training are becoming more crucial to finding work, colleges are becoming more and more relevant.

Even at the height of the recession, more than 83% of college graduates were hired within six months of graduation; 93% of employers were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of college graduates.

These days, it is crucial that post-secondary institutions adapt to meet the changing demands of the workplace. Ontario's college system is at the forefront of these changes, offering a comprehensive range of programs from certificates to diplomas, degrees and apprenticeships. The fact that since 2007 the number of university graduates applying to college has increased more than 40% demonstrates the need to update our understanding of post-secondary education. We need to open more doors to college education by helping students transition between programs and facilitating credit transfers to and from universities.

In my riding, Conestoga College has had an enormous impact and has proven itself invaluable to Cambridge-North Dumfries residents. Its innovative food processors' institute is exactly the kind of relevant skilled trade that our Ontario colleges are in the business of teaching.

I hope all members of this House join me this evening to celebrate Ontario colleges and show our appreciation for the work they do.

### ROAD MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on the road conditions in northern Ontario, and in particular in Algoma-Manitoulin. In the north, we are very dependent on the roads and highways to get our kids to school, to get around our communities, and to access essential services like doctors, dentists and hospitals. Emergency vehicles often have to travel great distances on highways and rural roads to service members of our community who are in distress.

Snow will be flying soon. Not having the highways cleared, and cleared properly, is an accident waiting to happen. The Ministry of Transportation contracted out these jobs to a private company. We used to have good public service employees clearing our roads. These public employees were accountable to us, the taxpayers. Now we have a private company clearing our roads and a

response time which is lagging. The roads are simply not being cleared, and this is unacceptable. Big surprise.

Northern and rural Ontarians are as important as other Ontario residents, and we should be able to get to our destinations safely. So we in Algoma-Manitoulin are very interested in how this government is prepared to deal with this situation.

We had our first snowstorm, which really wasn't that bad according to our standards, but because of the terrible road conditions and services, many highways were closed for an extended period of time. This is totally unacceptable. Lives are at stake. Answers are required. Accountable public services are the solution.

### GO TRANSIT

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Last Friday, I was pleased to welcome Gary McNeil, president of GO Transit, to my riding to announce that GO rail service will start in Guelph and Kitchener on December 19. Since last year, when we announced that Guelph will be getting GO trains, my constituents have been very excited about the return of GO train service, which was cancelled in 1993 by the NDP.

Commuters from Guelph will now have more options, and many will find it more convenient to take public transit and leave their cars at home. Monday to Friday, there will be two morning trains to Toronto and two return trains in the afternoon. Trains along the line will also stop at the Georgetown, Mount Pleasant, Brampton, Bramalea, Malton, Etobicoke North, Weston and Bloor GO stations, providing maximum flexibility for Guelph and Kitchener commuters.

Commuters will be able to use their Presto cards to get on the GO train in Guelph, seamlessly connecting them with other Presto-enabled systems in the GTA.

Not only will this \$18-million investment by GO help get cars off the road; this project has created approximately 180 design and construction jobs.

Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that understands that better public transit means a better quality of life for Ontario families.

### COLLINGWOOD GENERAL AND MARINE HOSPITAL

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My statement is directed at the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and it concerns the need for an expansion of the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital.

The government has left the hospital's expansion application in abeyance for more than seven years. Regrettably, this neglect has serious consequences for local health care.

The hospital cannot sustain clinical programs on its current footprint. The emergency room is grossly inadequate and doesn't meet the standards for a hospital that serves 32,000 ER visits each year. There is simply no more physical space to uphold the outstanding level of



care provided by local doctors, nurses, staff and volunteers.

They have already moved the administration into modular buildings and knocked down walls to expand capacity. Thanks to the support of the hospital's foundation and the county of Simcoe, the old administrative offices have been turned into an endoscopy suite, and renovations are also being done on operating rooms, the sterile processing department and the dialysis unit.

Despite the hospital's best efforts, there are no more broom closets that can be turned into hospital rooms. They can't add another dialysis machine to meet local demand because there's nowhere to put one.

In 2011-12, the government is projected to spend over \$1.4 billion on its health capital program. That's money already being spent across this province. Collingwood General and Marine Hospital only needs \$1 million of that allocation to get started. Then they need to be put into the queue and given the green light to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, we're not asking for new money; we're simply asking for our fair share. I urge the government to respond to the needs of patients in southern Georgian Bay.

#### GOVERNMENT POLICIES

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** It's truly an honour to represent my community in this chamber. Thank you to the thousands of residents of Davenport who worked on my campaign and who put their faith in me to represent them here at Queen's Park.

It's our responsibility as elected representatives of this province to reverse the trend of political cynicism and restore hope to Ontarians. There is little inspiring about a status quo agenda where the largest corporations receive no-strings-attached tax cuts while everyday people are asked to go without.

We lose hope when we're told that government is impotent in the face of global financial markets, that those we elect cannot act on our behalf. We lose hope in our electoral system when we watch the government give away billions of dollars to the wealthiest and then claim there is no money left for food or housing, for child care or public transportation, for libraries or social assistance.

Voters in my riding are sick of this race to the bottom. They are sick of cuts and layoffs; of increased user fees and reduced services; of watching wages stagnate while costs of living continue to rise, when the only new jobs that are created are part-time and precarious, with no pensions or benefits.

My constituents want to hear what we can do when we work together. They want to hear that we can have clean air and water, that our children can have the best start, that our seniors can live in dignity, that our workers can be properly respected and compensated, and that our vulnerable communities will always be supported in times of need.

It's our challenge in hard times to do more, not less, for Ontario. We can do better; we must do better. This is

no small challenge, but let's not forget: This is why we're here.

#### DAVID EVANS

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** For those of us who are fortunate enough to live in the riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville, the fire station at the corner of Highway 10 and Fairview in Cooksville is a landmark. I was at this fire station last Friday to meet with Fire Chief John McDougall and all the other fine firefighters who work there.

One of those firefighters, David K. Evans, was awarded the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery yesterday, right here at Queen's Park. Lieutenant Governor David Onley, along with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, gave the award.

Firefighter David Evans's story is a profile in courage, selflessness and humility. He was off duty, having lunch at a deli, when he noticed smoke coming out of the apartment above the deli. Despite having no protective gear, firefighter Evans made several attempts to enter the smoke-filled apartment and rescued the woman living in that apartment. The woman was treated for second- and third-degree burns, and firefighter Evans had to be treated for smoke inhalation. Luckily, the woman survived.

It is such acts of bravery and selflessness that make our communities rich, vibrant and safe. Mississauga East-Cooksville is indeed privileged to have firefighter David Evans on its team, and I was privileged to be able to attend the ceremony yesterday.

1510

#### FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors, who are here at Queen's Park today. I want to commend them and Ontario's food and beverage processors for developing a strategy to strengthen and grow their industry. Already they have over \$33 billion in annual sales, and their goal is to increase it to \$40 billion. I think it is particularly important that this strategy includes the entire value chain from farm to retail.

The PC caucus recognizes that the food and beverage processing industry is an essential part of our provincial economy and our agriculture industry, purchasing a full 70% of Ontario's farm production. We are pleased to continue working with the industry to address issues such as red tape, the need for skilled workers, and decreasing hydro costs.

In their strategy, they said, "Innovation in Ontario processing companies is being held back by a complicated, outdated regulatory system that has not kept pace with changes in the marketplace." That is why, last May, the Ontario PC caucus announced our commitment to one-

window access to government through OMAFRA, as requested by the Ontario food and beverage processing sector.

Already, the industry is the second-largest employer in Ontario, employing 110,000 people. We know that this industry has the potential to create even more jobs if we can address issues like the regulatory burden. Tim Hudak and I are looking forward to meeting with them this afternoon to continue to work with them to ensure a strong Ontario beverage and food processing industry.

Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to bring this statement to the House, Speaker.

### FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It is my pleasure to offer a very warm welcome today to representatives of the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors. The alliance represents the interests of the Ontario food and beverage processing industry, manufacturers of products that we enjoy every day.

The food and beverage processing industry is a major contributor to jobs and the economy of Ontario. As the largest manufacturing employer in Ontario, it directly employs over 110,000 people, some in my riding of York South–Weston, and it is the major customer of Ontario's farmers, transforming over 70% of what is produced at the farm level into safe, quality food for consumers.

This is the third year running in which the alliance has held a Queen's Park day. Representatives of food and beverage manufacturers will be meeting today with MPPs and government officials to talk about some of the major issues affecting their industry. They will be discussing the various opportunities that the industry can provide to support the government's key priorities of innovation, creating skilled jobs and building the economy.

Alliance members have travelled from all across the province to let us know that they are important assets to our communities. Please join them in the legislative dining room from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. I encourage all members to attend.

### JEAN CASSELMAN WADDS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's truly a privilege to rise today to pay tribute to Mrs. Jean Casselman Wadds. It's not only people in Leeds–Grenville mourning the loss of Mrs. Casselman Wadds, a resident of Prescott who passed away on November 25.

This remarkable woman was a true pioneer. Her career in public service blazed a trail and opened doors for generations of women who would follow. A member of the Order of Canada, Mrs. Casselman Wadds was our federal member of Parliament for Grenville–Dundas from 1958 to 1968. She won the seat in a by-election to replace her late husband, Arza Clair "A.C." Casselman.

The impact she made was nothing short of history-making.

The first woman ever named a parliamentary secretary, she and her father, former Ontario Lieutenant Governor William Earl Rowe, remain the only father-daughter duo to sit as MPs in the same session of Parliament.

Later, she was the first woman appointed Canada's high commissioner to the United Kingdom. In this role, she played a key part in the history-changing repatriation of Canada's Constitution. No less than former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau offered this at the time: "I always said it was thanks to three women that we were eventually able to reform our Constitution: the Queen ... Margaret Thatcher ... and Jean Wadds, who represented the interests of Canada so well in London."

Mr. Speaker, time limits my ability to paint the full picture of this truly outstanding Canadian. On behalf of myself, the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and all of the citizens of our ridings and the province of Ontario, I offer my sincere condolences to her family. And to her daughter, Nancy, and her son, Clair, I trust you will find some comfort in your time of grief in knowing what an indelible mark your mother left on our community and this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm sure everyone in the House feels the same way. Thank you, member.

### ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2010-11 annual report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### ATTRACTING INVESTMENT AND CREATING JOBS ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 VISANT À ATTIRER LES INVESTISSEMENTS ET À CRÉER DES EMPLOIS

Mr. Duguid moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act respecting the continuation and establishment of development funds in order to promote regional economic development in eastern and southwestern Ontario / Projet de loi 11, Loi concernant la prorogation et la création de fonds de développement pour promouvoir le développement économique régional dans l'Est et le Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'll make my statement under ministerial statements, Mr. Speaker.

## HELPING VOLUNTEERS GIVE BACK ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 VISANT À AIDER LES BÉNÉVOLES À CONTRIBUER

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act respecting criminal record checks for volunteers / Projet de loi 12, Loi concernant les vérifications du casier judiciaire des bénévoles.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker. This private member's bill is as a result of my trying to encourage volunteerism in Ontario. Currently, you need to get a criminal record check for every individual organization that you volunteer with. My bill would allow you to use the same criminal record check for five organizations and be able to use it for over the calendar year.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm pleased to speak to the House today about another step that the McGuinty government is taking to create jobs and bring investment to Ontario.

Since 2003, we have worked closely with the business community and regional economic development partners to attract new investment and create jobs for Ontario families. We've partnered with companies that are making investments in Ontario and creating jobs. Our different economic funds have leveraged over \$8.6 billion in business investment, creating over 12,100 new jobs and protecting over 19,300 existing jobs across Ontario.

It is no secret that the global economy remains fragile and the road to economic growth will be challenging. The debt crisis in Europe, the slow economic recovery in the United States and increased competition from low-cost jurisdictions continue to impact our economy.

We don't yet know how much of an impact that will have on Ontario. That is why we're taking further action today by proposing the creation of a southwestern Ontario development fund and by proposing the continuation of the eastern Ontario development fund.

1520

Mr. Speaker, southwestern Ontario, with a rich tradition and high concentration of manufacturing jobs, has endured a significant number of plant closures, with people being laid off during the economic downturn. Eastern Ontarians are among the largest number of people still looking for work. As a government, we recognize the value and unique nature of our regional economies, and we understand the need to collaborate and partner with businesses and regional communities to attract and retain economic opportunities and to create and protect good jobs for Ontario families.

The proposed Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act would help our regional economies become more competitive, dynamic and innovative, and strengthen Ontario's overall economy. Specifically, the act, if passed, would continue the eastern Ontario development fund and create the southwestern Ontario development fund. Together, they would promote innovation, collaboration, cluster development and job creation in those regions.

The proposed legislation builds on the success of the eastern Ontario development fund, which has already supported over 100 projects, leveraging over \$485 million in private sector investment and creating or retaining 11,700 jobs across eastern Ontario. As we did in developing the eastern Ontario development fund, we'll be consulting with the people living in southwestern Ontario to gather their advice and input into the creation of the new southwestern Ontario development fund. These consultations will help us to better understand their challenges and how we can work together to strengthen southwestern Ontario's economy.

The proposed legislation, if passed, would require the funds to be reviewed within five years to ensure that they are achieving their intended objectives and investment outcomes.

Finally, our government has identified the cost offsets for funding these important investments, and the gentleman to my right is very interested to know that.

Mr. Speaker, the Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act would build on our efforts to make Ontario the best place in North America to do business and supports the government's plan to strengthen our economy. Our government will work with Ontario families to see our province through these challenging times.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Response?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for recognizing me here this afternoon to speak to this bill. It's an honour to rise to offer feedback and comments on this bill on behalf of opposition.

You see, Mr. Speaker, while the honourable Minister for Economic Development and Innovation makes mention of a number of interesting things, a few important facts might have been overlooked and must be returned to the forefront again here today.

As you will know, under the current Dalton McGuinty government, Ontario has lost over 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs, and we are now losing over 100 jobs

per hour. That's right, Mr. Speaker: Since we had our prayers earlier this morning, nearly 750 Ontarians have lost their jobs. There are 750 Ontarians who went to work yesterday but won't be doing so tomorrow, 750 Ontarians who used to pay taxes and help our economy but who have now been deemed surplus and unnecessary. These are people who want to work, are able-bodied, but now have no place to go, no place to hang their hat.

You may have also noticed a slight rise in the temperature here at Queen's Park. We've had a lot of hot air about world economic challenges and how policies and decisions in Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Spain have impacted us here in Ontario, about how others are to blame for our economic conditions. I've even heard some of my friends on the government side talk about their so-called record of economic successes. But unfortunately, for too many families this couldn't be further from the truth and certainly does not reflect reality.

As a small businessman and someone who employs over 65 people at our family business, I can tell you the facts on the ground don't jive with the words coming from the government. You see, under the Dalton McGuinty government, we have seen skyrocketing energy rates, increased red tape and government bureaucracy and, of course, our ineffective and antique apprenticeship system. This is why we have a jobs crisis in the province of Ontario.

But here we are today, continuing down the same path as before, blindly throwing money at problems in the hopes that some of it sticks, but this very approach is how we've ended up in the situation we are now in, with hundreds of thousands of unemployed Ontarians.

It's really very simple. This government has a spending problem, and spending more money when you're in debt is a bad decision, the wrong decision, and certainly won't help get Ontarians back to work.

We have heard from Ontarians time and time again that they don't want a government that picks winners and losers, that pits rural versus urban, that favours one region over another or one industry over another. Most importantly, they want a change in direction, new thinking and new ideas coming from their government. But Dalton McGuinty and his government just don't get it.

It's not just members of the opposition saying this, Mr. Speaker. As reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* on November 15, the recent Roger Martin report has asked that the government abandon "its policy of picking 'winners and losers' ... through subsidies to businesses." This is a respected dean from the Rotman School of Management saying this.

Our position is quite clear: We cannot support additional spending without significant savings elsewhere. We cannot continue writing cheques that we can't cash. We can't buy things that we can't afford. Families in Ontario understand this, small businesses in Ontario understand this, and certainly the Ontario PC caucus and members of the opposition understand this. To be clear, it's not government's job to pick winners and losers amongst privately owned companies.

Again, Ontario families can't afford these subsidies and corporate handouts. So I will be voting against this bill, and I encourage my colleagues in the House to do the same. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Response?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I will be speaking to this bill in terms of what it may or may not be doing, and I will also speak to what the government is doing that I profoundly, Minister of Finance—actually, I'm not quite there, Minister. Others were, but not me. And while it takes some people a long time to get there, you've got to work at it. I will have a lot more to say about what your government is not doing, but I'll get to that, because I've got a few minutes.

On this issue, on this bill, New Democrats will be looking for a number of things. We'll be looking to ensure that there are real job guarantees built into agreements with companies. There are too many instances of companies pocketing government money and then laying off their workers. We'll be looking for assurances that money isn't simply being diverted from other economic development programs into this new program; in other words, that there will be a positive net economic benefit to the province once fiscal offsets are taken into account. And we'll be interested in the mix of loans and grants that the new fund will offer. Will this be strictly a grant program, as is its eastern Ontario equivalent, or will it offer loans as well? These are the kinds of things that we'll be looking at.

I've got to tell you, we have been concerned about the direction of this government, not just yours, but Conservatives as well, because for the last 15 years, both you and Tories have been giving away across-the-board tax reductions that have created very few jobs. Tories are real believers, but when I hear Liberals expound the same ideas, I begin to worry, because you guys often want to say that you're different, but you are not.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Oh, we are.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You're not. For the last eight years, you boys and gals have been cutting corporate tax cuts as if you were no different than they.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's not what they say.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's true. But it seems to me that Liberals are Tories in a hurry, and they have been for the last eight long years. There is, Minister of Finance, absolutely no evidence that giving taxpayers' money away, billions and billions every year, is creating any jobs.

Minister of Economic Development, you look quizzical about the whole affair, but if you could produce any evidence that would satisfy me and citizens and taxpayers, which is the language of the Tories, that somehow all these billions of dollars that you're taking away from citizens to give to them has actually produced jobs—give me a little evidence. I'm not asking for much, Minister: just a little piece of paper, one fact sheet talking about the great evidence, the pile of paper that you and Mr. Drummond have that giving our money away to banks, insurance companies and other corporations is helping anybody.



1530

For the last 15 years, corporations take the money and they bank it, they keep it, they store it. They don't put money back into the investments in their plants, in machinery and other information technology. They're simply not doing that. Other countries are, but we in Canada are not doing a great job, and yet we keep cutting corporate taxes each and every year. You would think that with all the billions that you Liberals give that they would invest in their own plants, in machinery and information technology. They're not doing it.

Shouldn't some Liberals ask the question why—at least, as I often say, one of you? Not one of you is asking that question? Would that I would be in your caucus meetings to hear that maybe there are some of you asking these questions. But please, be bold enough in this Legislature to admit that you are doing that.

Look, there are other jurisdictions—Manitoba and Quebec—that have done much better than we in these recessionary periods. They've done much better, and they have targeted investment tax credits that have worked for Manitoba and Quebec. We should be doing more of that so that we can create good, long-term jobs. Liberals are not doing it.

## PETITIONS

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built over 200 feet (60 metres) below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source for over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA's potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry.”  
I will sign that petition.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

“Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians, including the people of Elmvale.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and I'll sign it.

### RAIL SERVICE

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I have one petition here, so I would ask for some assistance from our pages. This is not a petition in favour of the forestry sector, however, as I've used a few trees.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, on June 24, 2011, Metrolinx announced that they would award a contract to refurbish 127 railway cars operated by the Ontario government's GO Transit to CAD Rail located in Montreal;

“Whereas it is abundantly clear Metrolinx did not take into consideration the overall net benefit to the province of Ontario in their evaluation of the CAD Rail bid versus the Ontario Northland bid;

“Whereas the Ontario government has the capacity to have this work performed in its own rail facilities at Ontario Northland, where a similar 121-GO-train-car refurbishment is coming to a close and the overall net benefit in retaining this work at Ontario Northland far outweighs having this work leave the province of Ontario;

“Whereas awarding of the contract to Ontario Northland would result in \$34 million spent on direct wages, providing a return on \$7.5 million in tax revenue to the province—not including the 233 other estimated direct and indirect jobs that would have been realized in the region—thus making the Ontario Northland bid ‘significantly superior’;

“We, the undersigned”—and there are 5,000 signatures here—“do hereby petition the government of Ontario to step in now and award the Metrolinx contract based on the ‘overall net benefit to Ontario.’”

Speaker, I agree and affix my signature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Further petitions? The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** And I ask that pages Ashley—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, carry on.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** —Yousef and Danica deliver them.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario”—I don’t have 5,000 signatures here, but I do have some.

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.

A great petition. I support it, Speaker, and send it down with Christian.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas there are over 300 homes in the area of the proposed UDI Port Ryerse Wind Farm;

“Whereas a precedent has been set by other counties in Ontario for bylaws of increased setbacks of 1,200 to 2,000 metres for the erection of wind turbines in populated areas;

“Whereas property values are decreased by proximity to wind turbines;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reinstate municipal powers to

allow Norfolk county to reassess and increase setbacks to 2,000 metres in populated areas, to honour a moratorium on construction until these bylaw adjustments are met, and to reimburse lost property values in this affected community.”

I agree with what the people of Port Ryerse, west of Port Dover, are saying, and I affix my signature to that.

### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr. Steve Clark:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

“Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment, to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis.”

I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with page Andrew.

1540

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** “Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I support this and will sign it as well.



## LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontarians who now live in long-term-care (LTC) homes are increasingly older, frailer and have greater complex care needs;

"Whereas our elder parents, family and friends deserve to live with dignity and respect;

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government failed to revolutionize long-term care and broke its promise to seniors to provide \$6,000 in personal care, per resident;

"Whereas five years of Liberal inaction has restricted Ontario's ability to meet the demands of our aging population;

"Whereas more than 24,000 Ontarians are currently waiting for a LTC bed;

"Whereas Ontario funds significantly less resident care than Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and New Brunswick;

"Whereas dedicated LTC homes are short-staffed and have not been given resources to hire enough front-line workers to provide the level of care residents require;

"Whereas devoted LTC staff are burdened by cumbersome government regulations;

"Whereas some 35,000 seniors are living in LTC beds which do not meet more home-like design standards introduced in 1998 by the former PC government;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government must enhance long-term care by:

"—initiating a sector-wide staffing increase of 4,500 full-time positions within a year;

"—expediting the redevelopment of Ontario's 35,000 oldest long-term-care beds by providing adequate support and funding;

"—achieving an average of three worked hours of personal care, per day, within a year;

"—simplifying the regulations which govern nursing homes;

"—producing a comprehensive plan with benchmarks to reduce LTC wait-lists of more than 24,000 people;

"—addressing inflationary pressures by adequately funding the increased operating costs of LTC homes."

I'm pleased to affix my signature and give it to page Mobarrat.

## LYME DISEASE

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently

not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the US and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with the petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Theodore.

## AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Nepean—Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And may I say, you look lovely in the chair, as you did last year. It's great to see you—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Lovely? You're splendid?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Lovely.

This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built over 200 feet (60 metres) below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source for over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA's potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry."

I put this in on behalf of my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon. I'll affix my signature. Thank you, page Owen, for carrying that to the clerks' table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

## DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 28, 2011, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Windsor West.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Windsor West; I apologize.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you, Speaker. Please note that I'll be dividing my time with the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to address this esteemed group for the first time. It is truly my pleasure and honour to sit with every member of this House and to be part of the 40th Parliament of Ontario.

Given that this is my first speech, I trust you will indulge me a bit, as I will be thanking many who have given me this opportunity. First and foremost, to my constituents in Windsor West: I am truly humbled by the trust and faith you have placed in me to represent the area that I have called home my whole life. During the election I met with and spoke with thousands in the riding, speaking to them about the progress accomplished in our community and listening to their concerns. There is one promise that I personally made through the campaign, and that is to continue listening to their concerns and to work as hard as I can to effectively represent them.

To the many volunteers that gave their time and energy to my campaign: Thank you. Of course, to my family—my husband, John, and my boys, Anthony and Joshua, for the sacrifices they are making to allow me this opportunity—I will be forever grateful.

I've had the distinct pleasure of working with many leaders throughout by career, each of whom has made their mark on me and provided me with lessons that have allowed me to grow with the courage, strength and discipline required of an MPP.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention those who came before me in this chamber. Of course, many of you here today either worked with Sandra Pupatello or have heard of the former member for Windsor West. First elected in 1995, Sandra certainly made her mark not only for the people of Windsor West but across the province. She held many portfolios while in government, including community and social services, women's issues, education, economic development and trade, and international trade and investment.

Even in opposition she was making her mark, starting with the delivery of cereal boxes to then Premier Harris in support of breakfast programs.

1550

I had the privilege of working with Sandra for five years and, believe me, there were many lessons learned.

Locally, Sandra worked tirelessly for our community. Many have said that I have big shoes to fill, following Sandra as the MPP for Windsor West. I'm not so much filling her shoes as continuing in the plan to move Windsor West forward.

Some of you may even remember another fine member from the area previously known as Windsor—Sandwich, William Wrye. Bill was a member and cabinet minister under Premier David Peterson from 1981 to 1990, and served in both opposition and government. I also had the privilege of working with Bill and count him as a friend and mentor.

Speaker, there's another former staffer of Minister Wrye that sits with us in this House, the current Minister of Finance and member for Windsor—Tecumseh, the Honourable Dwight Duncan. I am grateful for his support and friendship. I will continue to need his good counsel and support as we work for the people of Windsor and Ontario together.

I represent a community that is rich in history, the gateway to Ontario and home to one of the most diverse communities in Canada. Windsor West has been this province's southern frontier for more than 300 years.

Windsor is often remembered as the automotive capital of Canada, and we are proud of our automotive and manufacturing history. In 1904, Ford Motor Company established its everlasting footprint in Windsor, along with General Motors, Chrysler, and many other car and truck companies. There is little question that Windsor put Canada on wheels.

Windsor's history began as a European settlement in 1701 when French-speaking migrants established a community on the south shore of the Detroit river. The settlement grew to include British migrants, creating the town of Sandwich. This was the site where General William Hull invaded upper Canada and later withdrew upon word of forces advancing under the leadership of Major General Isaac Brock and Chief Tecumseh. These heroic acts, along with many other acts, will be commemorated next year for the bicentennial of the War of 1812. I invite all Ontarians to come join us in Windsor and Essex county to celebrate our proud history.

Windsor's multiculturalism and openness is not only a current reality but has been the area's culture throughout its history. We have been a beacon for settlement for new Canadians—not foreigners, as some may call them, but new Canadians—from every region of this globe. Since the 19th century, many have sought refuge and established a new and free life in what is known as Windsor. The area's involvement in the underground railroad and respect for all members of the human race reflects the values we deeply cherish as Ontarians. The cultural diversity in Windsor West is a model for all Ontarians. Our residents are able to indulge in pleasures from around the world within the convenience of a few city blocks, creating a truly global citizenry.



Education is a cornerstone of our city and Windsor West is the proud home of both the University of Windsor and St. Clair College. These institutions, in partnership with many private sector partners, are innovating and conducting world-class research that is helping Ontario, Canada and the world progress. These amazing developments are happening today as I speak in this House.

We host one of the busiest trade crossings in North America, representing fully one third of all trade between Canada and the US. More trade goes across Windsor each day than Blue Water in Sarnia and all the Niagara crossings combined.

My community of Windsor West and its mild winters and pleasant summers is home to many seniors. The wealth of knowledge and history that our seniors bring to the area enrich all those they encounter. It is for this reason and many more that I, as well as my colleagues of the Liberal Party, are committed to our seniors. I would not be here if it were not for the guidance and teachings of my parents and elders.

As many here, I grew up listening to stories from my parents about when they first came to Ontario. Both came through Pier 21 in Halifax, my father in 1955 and my mother in 1963. Both hopped on a train to Red Lake, Ontario. I often imagined what it would be like—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** No kidding—what it would be like to land in a country where you don't know the language, the culture is different, and your family is thousands of kilometres away. What kind of services or supports would be required?

A couple of years ago, I had the pleasure of going to Halifax and visiting Pier 21. You could almost hear and feel the history of that place, the history of thousands coming to Canada, making their way over to Ontario for a better life for themselves and for their families. It is that history that makes us as strong as we are, and it is that history that demands that as MPPs we continue to support our families and keep Ontario strong.

It is in that context that I refer back to the recent throne speech. I am proud of the accomplishments this government has made over the last eight years in strengthening our health care system, our education system and our infrastructure. As we move forward together, we must protect those gains while continuing to protect our communities, grow our economy and support our families.

We know that there will be challenges. The Premier often reminds us that we were elected to make difficult choices, not take the easy way out. That is why we are here: to govern, to make decisions and to move Ontario forward. Governing is always more challenging in tough times, but with these challenges come great opportunities. That is why we must work together at accomplishing our goals.

Ultimately, each of us has the same goal: to represent our constituents and to make Ontario stronger for the next generation, just as our parents and grandparents did

for us. We will be faced with tough decisions, but I commit that I will work with all members of this assembly to move forward, working together, for that is the Ontario way.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am filled with awe each time I walk into this glorious chamber, and I take great pride in being a part of the 40th Parliament of Ontario. It is not many who are given this opportunity and privilege to lead and govern this great province of ours. As the member for Windsor West, I will always bear in mind its history and the critical role that it plays for our province. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I understand the member was indicating she wished to share her time with the member for Scarborough Southwest. I now recognize the member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** First of all, I want to congratulate the member from Windsor West for her maiden speech. It was excellent. Over the past couple of days, or today and yesterday, I've had a chance to listen to the maiden speeches of the new members, and they're all excellent. They're inspiring as well. Hopefully, this Legislature can live up to the inspiration that these new members bring to this place.

I want to start off—we are talking about the throne speech. The document that was laid before us last week sets out a vision. I listened the last few day days; there were members in the opposition, from both parties, who were very critical of the throne speech. I guess that's the opposition's job, to criticize the government and to point out any faults or any things that the government is not doing.

But I want to talk a little bit about the throne speech and talk about what it does. The throne speech that we have sets out a vision, a very clear vision. I think it's important that it sets out the vision that this government is going to work on during the next several months. It's an important vision because it provides clarity to uncertain times.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker: These are uncertain times. If we look at Europe, almost every day there's a headline about Europe and its markets and its finances and what's happening. I understand the finance ministers in Europe are meeting right now to provide clarity to the rest of the world as to what their plan is to help the countries that are involved in the European Union and to try to send a clear message to all people around the world that they know what they're doing—and hopefully that will come true.

1600

If we look south of us to the United States, we can see that the economy there is still in trouble. A lot of partisanship is taking place between the two major political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** There are three parties. How about the Tea Party?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** —and I guess the Tea Party as well. But the bottom line is that they are not able to put their financial house in order. The US economy is



still in trouble. It's not growing as fast as they want it to grow. I think that the problem will not be solved in the next day or the next month or perhaps even this year. We've heard a lot of doom and gloom from the United States, the world's largest economy. We've heard again and again that their growth rate is very small. If people have a chance—I had a neighbour go to the United States and he actually purchased a home in Nevada. The people who lived in that home just left, basically abandoning the mortgage, and he was able to pick up the house for \$40,000. That's true in other states as well. Michigan has a major problem, and other states as well.

Recently, I've been reading about cities that are not able to fund their budgets—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Tent cities, too.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Tent cities, I hear from my friend from Etobicoke North—that cannot manage their budgets and are declaring bankruptcy or are on the verge of declaring bankruptcy. That's very troubling to hear.

But the situation here in Ontario is a lot different. We haven't heard any city in Ontario declare bankruptcy or claim that they're on the verge of declaring bankruptcy. In the States, it's different. The cities are on the verge or have declared bankruptcy and have asked for state help. No one's come to this government and asked for a bailout or help with their budgets.

So, in spite of all the doom and gloom around the world, our government has laid out a vision, and I think that vision is important. It provides a road map for what we're going to do in the next few years so that we can continue to function and move forward in the face of a world economy which has changed and remains very uncertain.

Our five goals are very clear.

We want to continue to build a strong, more competitive workforce. When I was knocking on doors this past election, Mr. Speaker, people were asking me—they had lost their jobs, or they weren't able to sustain their household. Our government has provided a lot of opportunities for people to go back into the workforce by being retrained, whether it be by attending Centennial College or Seneca College or any other college that exists around Ontario. We've worked very hard with the community colleges and other learning institutions to provide retraining. It's difficult for some people who are a bit older, but when I knocked on doors in my riding, some people were telling me they had completed a particular course in a program and were rejoining the workforce, as they were retrained to do a completely different job than what they did before.

Secondly, in the throne speech, we talk about continuing to make investments in infrastructure. We've had a lot of announcements and a lot of talk and a lot of fulfilled promises on building a better infrastructure here in Ontario. We've created thousands of jobs by rebuilding the infrastructure, working on highways and GO train tracks and making continued announcements across the province so that it provides confidence for people that

either work in Ontario or live in Ontario, and they at least have the chance to see that this government is not going to stop, but will continue to move forward with its goals.

Thirdly, the throne speech makes it very clear that this government intends to continue to aggressively pursue new investment in the Ontario economy. We've seen foreign companies continue to expand here in Ontario, whether it be Samsung or Toyota, and other foreign-based companies come into Ontario. The opposition often argues about the fact that we have high taxes for companies that come into Ontario and that we should reduce the tax rate, but I argue the other side. By keeping the tax rate low—I'm sorry, I meant to say that we have a lower tax rate here—what's happening is companies are coming here. We have one of the most attractive jurisdictions in all of North America, where companies will come here because the tax rate is lower.

People say you should raise the tax rate on corporations. The corporations have changed over the years. They can move around jurisdictions very easily. It's not that they're stuck in a warehouse or a factory; they can move very quickly and just leave a certain jurisdiction and go elsewhere, invest in an area where they're able to function without having to worry about all the high tax rates that they'll have to pay.

Ontario's very, very welcoming to new companies. I knocked on doors and people argued, "Why don't you lower the taxes on people and make the corporations pay for everything?" But the fact is, if corporations come here, they bring new jobs, new opportunities and basically more work for more people.

I'm convinced that we've done the right thing when it comes to corporate taxes: you know, keep them low and they'll come here; increase the tax rate and they'll leave and go elsewhere, either to the United States, another province or even another part of the world. So we're welcoming new investment here, and I think that's very important.

The fourth thing is that the government will continue to focus on improving the quality of life for our families. This morning, we were debating the home renovation tax credit. People at the door had heard about this home renovation program and many people wanted to know more about it. It was in the brochure, the literature, that I carried door to door. They can get a tax credit if they are able to fix their homes to accommodate seniors who live in those homes, and I think it's a very good thing because one thing we want to do is keep elder people at home and not put them into nursing homes or other institutions, because it costs money to put seniors in those places. So we're asking people to fix their own homes, whether it be building a wheelchair ramp—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Sorry, I have to cut you off. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did listen quite intently to the new member from Windsor West. Congratulations on your successful replacement of Sandra Pupatello.



Sandra Pupatello—it would take me hours to really thoroughly comment on what she did while she was here, but she certainly was an effective member. Hopefully she's successful in her life after politics. I've heard she's actually in Newfoundland and Labrador. Her husband was recently elected there, and I believe she's run down there. She'd probably run into Danny Williams, I suppose.

I think it's important, in your maiden speech, to represent and thank those people who helped you to achieve that. I did hear you—the great privilege it is to be here. I think we all continue to feel that way. It's important to get that on the record, because it can become a bit partisan. You know, we're here for the right reasons. All of us want to make Ontario better. Anyone who assumes that anyone on this side, including Tim Hudak—we want Ontario to be effective, productive, and have opportunities for everyone. We've got to make sure we don't lose sight of that, that nobody is trying to turn Ontario into a have-not province. Sometimes you hear that being said in here. It's simply not true.

1610

Even the bill introduced today was a bit polarizing. It was pitting southwestern Ontario against eastern Ontario. I don't know why they do such divisive things that are not productive. In and of themselves, they're overtly political, and people watching become so frustrated with us. What's happened over the last eight or nine years? People don't even believe us any more. How many people didn't even bother voting? They've become apathetic and disappointed by the cynicism that we often bring to this place.

Now, the member from Scarborough Southwest has been here for some time. He's a nice young fellow, a lawyer, I believe. In fact, I believe his partner is also—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for London—Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, and good afternoon to everyone here today in the House.

I want to start by congratulating the member opposite from Windsor West and the member from Scarborough Southwest.

The member opposite referred to the part about continuing to listen to her constituents, and I hope we're also going to take that and continue to listen amongst each other; because in this minority government, that's part of the success that we're going to create for the people and the supporters that put us here.

Some other things I wanted to talk about was the word "sacrifice." We've all sacrificed our families, our jobs, all kinds of personal time, but it's an honour and a privilege to make that sacrifice, and I know we're all here to work really hard for the constituents in our riding. I'm looking forward to getting back to that work when we rise in the House.

I was also very pleased to hear about the history in Windsor that she talked about. I learned a little bit about Windsor, so thanks for that.

There was a comment about the jobs, of course. That's something on everyone's minds right now. One thing that we're finding—and I was at the door in the campaign—is that it's not working to just give blank cheques to corporations; there's got to be some type of accountability. So when a business or a corporation creates a job or buys a new piece of machinery, that's when they get their tax credit.

We need to try something different and we need to make it work here in Ontario. We owe it to the people who we came here to speak on behalf of. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. We continue with questions and comments. The member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I want to acknowledge my colleague's maiden speech, the member from Windsor West. As a desk mate but, more importantly, as a colleague, I think that I got to know and appreciate what you went through and your challenges—and ours together. I'm just thrilled that you'll be my desk partner for a little longer.

The throne speech draws on the importance of this government's commitment to education. I, for one, as a former school board trustee—more importantly, the importance of a post-secondary education is about building the economy, but most importantly, it's about an educated, strong workforce. I'm thrilled to see that our commitment is continuing to ensure families that are making less than \$160,000 a year will get tuition reduction support.

My high schools—Dr. Norman Bethune, L'Amoreaux high school, Stephen Leacock high school, Agincourt Collegiate, Sir John A. MacDonald—all of these young families will now have an opportunity to go on to post-secondary education. Regardless of whether it's college or university, they will now be given opportunities. I know they're getting ready now to apply for post-secondary education. Through this reduction, every young person, not just in my riding but across the province, will be given an opportunity to go to post-secondary education.

This is what this government is about: commitment to ensure that we have the strongest workforce, a well-educated workforce, to ensure success. I'm just thrilled to be a part of this government, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further questions and comments? The member for Leeds—Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to put a few comments on the record. I appreciate the speeches by both the member for Windsor West and the member for Scarborough Southwest.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome the member for Windsor West. I appreciated your maiden speech to learn a little bit more about Windsor. I can remember attending the AMO conference in Windsor just after my by-election in 2010 and it was a wonderful opportunity for our caucus to spend some time in that city.

I remember fondly knowing some friends from university who lived there, and I have to tell you, in my younger days I always had a fabulous time when I visited your community.

I also want to just—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** That's right, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I am still talking about it.

I do want to just make a few comments on something you said. You talked about the fact that there are difficult choices and not taking the easy way out and in fact to continue to support families. I know specifically the member for Scarborough Southwest made several comments about the throne speech. I think over the last week and a half that we've sat in this place, we've had an opportunity to show the public that we're willing to look at those decisions, to make some bold decisions here in the Legislature.

I know our leader, Tim Hudak, has made some excellent points here in the Legislature, things like a public sector wage freeze that I think we need to debate and we need to talk about in this place.

Just today, in talking about renewing our antiquated apprenticeship system, I think we're missing the opportunity to create 200,000 skilled trades jobs by not having the debate here in this Legislative Assembly. I hope it happens soon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time we have for questions and comments. I'll now return to the member for Windsor West, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you. I'd like to take this time to thank the members from Durham, London–Fanshawe, Scarborough–Agincourt and Leeds–Grenville for your comments today, as you all commented on my maiden speech. I'm glad I made some points that made you think and made you respond, so thank you.

I look forward to working with each of the members of the House in our shared objective to keep our communities strong, to support our families and to move Ontario forward, which I know we're all here to do.

I know that youth, like my children Anthony and Joshua and their friends at Notre Dame grade school and Assumption high school, are getting a world-class education; patients at our hospitals are getting enhanced care; and there are many working in jobs that have been created over the last couple of years through many of the initiatives of this government.

We are all well served by the progress that is made and I look forward to working with each of the members of this House on continued improvements—improvements that have been announced over the last couple of weeks. We've spoken about the healthy home renovation tax credit; we've spoken about assisting students in high school and university being able to afford their education. All of those will make us a stronger community.

I am also thankful for the announcement today that we introduced, in terms of the southwestern Ontario economic development fund. Being from Windsor and

having been in Windsor yesterday speaking to individuals about this fund, they are welcoming this fund. They do want to see the investments, they want to see the jobs created, and that's what our priority is. Our priority is job creation. Our priority is making our economy stronger. Only by a stronger economy and stronger jobs will we have community support and strong families.

So again, I thank everyone for their comments. I thank everyone for their statements made with respect to the throne speech. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and join the debate on the throne speech. I want to personally congratulate the member from Windsor West, as well, on her maiden speech today and being elected to this chamber. She feels the honour every time she comes into the chamber, and you'll feel that way for some time, I can assure you. I'm pleased to have you here and wish you the very best in your service to your community.

I welcome each and every one of the 31 members who have joined this assembly as a result of the October 6 election and wish them the very best as well. I know that each and every one of us comes here with the same belief that we are elected to improve our communities and improve the condition of this province which we call home.

1620

It's the greatest province in the country, in the greatest country in the world, and we're all working towards that. We just sometimes differ in how we're going to get there.

And that brings me to today's debate, Speaker, the throne speech. Not much there. In fact—and that's not a prop, Speaker, because this is a copy of the throne speech. In fact, I believe that I heard His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, when he finished this speech, say, somewhat under his breath, "That's it?"

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I do believe I heard that, because he read it to this chamber, and I'm sure he wondered himself. He must have been asking himself, "This is the best that the government can bring forward? We just had an election. The economy of this province is in the throes of one of its most difficult times that we can remember, and that's it? Wow."

I'm going to get back to the throne speech in a minute, because I know we do have a little bit of latitude in the throne speech debate, and we don't get the opportunity sometimes, Speaker, to talk about the issues that matter, because they're not directly related to specific legislation. But we are talking about the election itself and what happened, and one of the things—

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** You lost.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, thank you very much, Harinder, for reminding me.

One of the things that I find most distressing about the last couple of elections is the mess—the mess—that Elections Ontario has made of voting in this province.



It's an absolute disgrace, the number of people with incorrect information. You know, we just had a federal election in May of this year, Speaker, and if Elections Ontario would have used some of the federal data, we would have had a much more efficient election operation here in the province of Ontario. And I believe absolutely that that led to the poor voter turnout in this province: 49%, less than half of the people eligible to vote in this province, voted in this past election. That should be something that is of deep concern to each and every person that sits in this chamber, that less than half of the people that are eligible to vote actually voted.

I'm going to tell you about a couple of instances, and then I'll get to the throne speech. People in my riding who were showing up to vote in the hamlet of Madawaska, for example—because they confuse Madawaska with somewhere else at Elections Ontario. Maybe they should come up to visit the beautiful area that I live in. I had one gentleman who always has voted in Madawaska. He lives on Aylen Lake, and do you know where they had him voting? I say to the member for Windsor West, he might have been down there, because they had him voting in Windsor. Yes. Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, in the district of Nipissing, and they were sending him to Windsor to vote. Now, if it wasn't so sad, it would be funny.

But I'm going to tell you, we should all commit, each and every one of us in this chamber, to get this right. We have a responsibility. We have a responsibility to everyone who has the right to vote. As I say, these young pages here, they'll have the right to vote in not that many years, and we have a responsibility to get it right so that those people who are eligible to vote are able to vote in a streamlined and efficient fashion. We're living in the 21st century, for goodness' sake, and we can't get it right? My goodness gracious. When my father was a member here in 1963, we didn't have problems like this voting. We live in a computer age. How can we not get it right?

Elections Ontario needs to be called on the carpet. There should be a committee set up to deal with the mess that they created in this election, and let's get it straight for next time.

So back to the throne speech, that vacuous bit of nothingness that we heard last week, November 22. I heard the member say about making choices and making tough decisions. There are no decisions in that throne speech. "Let's muddle along with a few of the things that we promised while we were out on the campaign trail and see if we can fool the people for a little longer. Maybe if we just avoid facing the facts that we've got a mess on our hands, maybe if we just pretend, you know, put the hands up over the eyes, maybe the people will fall for it." I don't think they're going to, Speaker.

But it is the responsibility of this government—yes, it is a minority. Remember one thing over there, I say to you: You didn't win a minority; you lost your majority. Remember that: You lost your majority.

So there is a message, a very clear message, being sent to you on that side of the chamber. One of the things is to

pay a little more attention to what's going on and to what you're hearing from this side of the chamber. We're all elected, too, and there's a lot more people voted against you than for you. You've got to start listening. This is a minority Parliament. You've got to start paying attention.

It's time to say goodbye to that arrogance of the last Parliament; it's time to say goodbye to that. You should have lost some of that with the results of the election.

It's time to get down to brass tacks and get down on the business of trying to turn this province around. You've created half this mess. Goodness gracious, see if you can't help try and fix it. We're going to do our part, I can tell you that much.

Now, where was I? Back to the throne speech. Let's make some tough choices. Let's make some really meaningful decisions. Looking at the financial update that the finance minister seemed almost proud—

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Don't get personal, Harinder. The finance minister proudly got up to say that he had a \$16-billion deficit. I'd be ashamed. Speaker, this province is in a financial mess.

And what do you do—you know, if one part of your expenditures accounts for 60% of that, how would you ever expect to get your fiscal house in order if you don't deal with that 60%? Across the country, jurisdictions are saying, "We're going to put in a wage freeze for the public sector." Now, somebody might say, "Oh, my, isn't that draconian?" All we're saying is that we're asking the people who are working for the government in the public sector to forgo a wage increase at a time of terrible economic difficulty in this province. That's what we're asking you to do.

The government in 2010 talked—they talked—about a wage freeze. But do you see what they wanted to do? They wanted to make it voluntary. You know why? Because, you see, Speaker, there was an election coming up, and part of the support group, part of the group that spent \$9 million trying to defeat and malign and assassinate the character of Tim Hudak was their friends in the Working Families Coalition, funded by Liberal-friendly unions. So do you think they were going to put in the mandatory wage freeze? Nay. It's not going to happen; it's a non-starter. Pat Dillon said no. Pat Dillon said, "No, we're not going to allow you to do that, Premier McGuinty." So they didn't, and now the problem has only gotten worse.

The member from Scarborough was talking about Greece and the mess in Europe. Oh, yes, it's quite a mess, all right—and how did it get there? It got there because they wouldn't rein in government spending. That's the key ingredient there: 38% of the population in Greece was somehow being paid for through the public sector, one way or another. It's not sustainable.

And this government, while it was in office, its answer was to spend, spend, spend and hope that they got something back in the form of political support. It's nothing to do with making the economy work or the province more efficient. Spend: Public sector unions get



something back in the form of, "Join the Working Families Coalition. Make sure you keep the Tories out of power."

1630

It's reminiscent of the 1980s, of the Peterson government, while they spent money like drunken sailors—with all due respect to the drunken sailors. Speaker, they couldn't control themselves. And what happened? You see, they had this accord from 1985. They wanted to make everybody their friend, so they took the rest of the people's money and made as many people their friends as possible by spending it. Then, in 1987, they won their massive majority, but all of a sudden, they said, "Oh, my goodness, you know what? You just can't keep spending forever. Sooner or later, the bills have to be paid." They figured it out. They were glad to go, practically, in 1990, because then the NDP that they had worked together with from 1985-87 took over government in 1990. And you know what? In all fairness to the NDP, they didn't create the problem; they got it from the Liberals of David Peterson. Now, they didn't do a good job of managing it either.

Four consecutive years of \$10-billion deficits added massively to the debt and created all kinds of problems that had to be dealt with. You guys are doing the same thing now. The debt of this province is over \$250 billion—

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Most of it created by Conservative governments.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, no, no, no. Maybe you'd better check Dwight Duncan's economic update. Read it in the book: \$250 billion. They got rid of the deficit. Do you think you can get rid of it overnight? My goodness gracious, you know better than that—\$250 billion of debt.

And that \$250 billion, Speaker: Do you know what it costs us to service that debt? This year, over \$10 billion—\$10 billion. If we don't control that deficit—you see, it's an accumulation, folks. It's an accumulation. So when we add another \$15 billion or more to the debt next fiscal year, those interest payments are going up, okay? They just keep going up. What's going to happen in this province, Mr. Speaker, if interest rates go up a point, half a point, two points? Who knows? What happens then?

This is the situation you create when you fail to govern with propriety and strength when you have to. They just let the thing—they're whistling past the graveyard and letting the fiscal condition of this province deteriorate more and more on a daily basis—on a daily basis.

You have to take stock of your own situation. You have to ask yourselves the question—and I say to the members opposite, don't just line up like lemmings behind Dalton and Dwight and let them lead you over the cliff, because that's where you're going. You've got to stand up to them. You've got to stand up to them and say, "Look, we want to act responsibly here in this province. We want to do the right thing, and the right thing is

getting our fiscal house in order." And it starts by doing the right thing and instituting a public sector wage freeze.

Speaker, here's the funny thing, getting back to that cozy mingling of the people of these two groups, the Working Families Coalition and the Liberal Party. It's just so intertwined, it's—gosh. You see, the non-union public sector workers, you're frozen. You know? Boom. That's it: Non-union public sector workers: Wages are frozen. Easy to do. You know what? Those non-union public sector workers are soon going to want to get a seat at the Working Families Coalition board, because I guess the only way to find your way into the hearts of the Liberal government is to make sure that you're funding the anti-Hudak campaign, it seems to be. So that's step number one: Get your fiscal house in order.

The other thing is about getting your priorities straight. Last week was somewhat historic; it was moving, in fact, to see the New Democrats and the Progressive Conservatives working together to bring relief to the beleaguered families, seniors and small businesses of Ontario. What was that measure of relief, Speaker? It was the private member's bill, I believe from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, Mr. Mantha: We're going to remove the HST from home heating. You know what, folks? She's getting colder out there.

When I talk to people in my riding and I say to them, "What do you think you'd rather see, the HST off home heating or this tax credit where, if you're rich enough to spend \$10,000 to put in maybe a walk-in tub or a stairlift, if you've got the 10 grand, the government may find \$1,500 for you?" They say to me, "First of all, we don't have the 10 grand. Secondly, it's not that we are in that mobility-challenged state yet. You know where we're challenged? We're challenged about staying in our home not because of our health, but because of our financial health because of what that government has done to us." It's not their physical health; it's their financial health.

So we said: Do you know what? Is it not the right thing to do, Speaker, to offer them some form of relief, to give them a break?

So Mr. Mantha, along with my Conservative colleagues in this House, we actually passed the bill. It passed second reading in this House, which means that the will of the Legislature is that that rebate to people in this province would stand. That's the will of this Legislature. That's how it works—except, in the convoluted world of the government, they control what gets to third reading. And the finance minister just said—do you know what he said to those people out there? Do you know what he said to those people? "I'm not too worried about whether you can pay your oil bill or whether you can pay your gas bill or whether you can heat your house; we're not giving it."

I've got an email here. I'm running out of time. As one person from my constituency said, "My wife and I are senior citizens living on a couple of pensions and cannot afford this. We will be freezing this winter as I must turn the thermostat way down."

That's just a sample of what we're getting. We need help, real help for all people, not this targeted stuff that is



politically motivated. That's the problem, and that's what gets me: Everything they do is politically motivated. Can't they just see for once that everybody out there needs a break? You've got to stop focusing on your political agenda and start thinking about people, because that's who we're here to represent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to follow some of the comments from the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, although I'm sure I can't equal his delivery.

I would like to comment firstly on Elections Ontario. That is one of the reasons why our voting is going down, and I'll give you an example. In the advance polls in the little town of Thorne—the honourable member for Nipissing would know exactly where that is—the advance poll was in Sturgeon Falls, so the voters had to go all the way across the honourable member of Nipissing's riding to vote in an advance poll for my riding. It's ridiculous.

1640

Now, on the throne speech, the throne speech was, from a farmer's viewpoint, and I'm a farmer, very thin on two things. Agriculture and the processing of agricultural products is something we've talked a lot about today. It was totally ignored in the throne speech. It's one of the greatest industries—value-added, job-added—in this province. It wasn't mentioned at all.

The second thing: The only time—and I'm a northern farmer—that northern Ontario was mentioned in the throne speech was the Ring of Fire, because somebody wants to pay off the deficit with the Ring of Fire. What we know in northern Ontario is that to have lasting jobs from the Ring of Fire, we've got to process that ore in this province. That will create lasting jobs, because we've been through this before. We have been through this before, where you take the gold, you take the silver, and when the boom is over, our towns are left to die. We have to learn from what we've done wrong in the past.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Ottawa–Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd just like to respond to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I'd just like to remind him that his government, in 2003, left us with a \$5.4-billion debt, in good times. And as I understand it, you lied about it and you said it was a—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You've got to withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Pardon me?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You've got to withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I withdraw.

So we didn't know about the \$5.4-billion debt, and that was in good times. That was in addition to the tens of billions of dollars of infrastructure needs that were left: unbuilt roads, unbuilt hospitals, unbuilt colleges and

universities. So in the last eight years, the infrastructure deficit has been paid for by the province of Ontario.

I want to speak to the main issue in the speech from the throne, which was jobs, and jobs are very important. That's why we brought in comprehensive tax changes. You've heard that many groups feel that Ontario is the best place in North America to invest in because of those tax changes, and so they've been done.

I'd like also to speak today, in the 40 seconds that I have left, about 10,000 jobs that were in the city of Ottawa that have now been moved by Baird and O'Connor and Poilievre to Kanata. They're out of the reach of the people in my riding of Ottawa–Orléans. It will be 5,000 families in Ottawa–Orléans that will probably have to move. It will make our city significantly less sustainable. We're going to move the jobs to Kanata, so instead of promoting densification, which has been historically what Ottawa does, we're going to be promoting urban sprawl. I wanted to mention that today, so thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I congratulate the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on his eloquent 20-minute speech.

I too have a familiar story of Elections Ontario. In a recent election, my wife and I, who have been together 25 years, four months and 15 or 16 days, depending on the date today—17 days. It's 25 years, four months and 17 days today. We have lived in the same home together and have voted in the same polling booth or polling station together.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Do you vote the same way?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Well, I don't ask her that, how she votes. Nonetheless, in a recent election, I got to vote less than a half mile from our door, and yet she had to vote in another community, Astorville, which is a place, in an arena, that she has never been to at any time in her life and that was several dozen miles away, yet we've been voting in the same place together all these years. It was strange, so I do concur.

With respect to your comments on the throne speech, I don't have to tell you, member, that our party stands for private sector job creation, reducing government waste and government spending and bringing relief to families. We did not see that in this throne speech. An opportunity to bring relief to families would have been to honour the HST off home heating that we saw our NDP propose. That would bring real relief to families—in fact, immediate relief to families.

So, thank you, member, for your wonderful and entertaining 20-minute speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question and comment. I turn to the member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour and pleasure to rise today to join in on the debate. I thank my honourable colleagues, who have



offered some quite poignant commentary on the speech from the throne several days ago.

I think what we're speaking about, the general consensus is what we've found as a common narrative in this book or maybe what we haven't found. Some have raised the issue that there was no relief from the harmonized sales tax. Many members indicated that Elections Ontario has some issues. I might offer some of my commentaries on what I've seen repeated very often in this book—two recurring themes, one of massive corporate tax cuts and the other of a fiscal messiah named Don Drummond.

Both of these, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, won't resonate within the boundaries of my riding of Essex. I'll tell you why: because it is a working class riding. It's a riding of blue-collar workers, people who really don't have massive financial acumen. It's the people who built this country, a largely manufacturing base, a massive agriculture base. Names like Don Drummond just don't resonate with them.

But I'll tell you who does, Mr. Speaker. I pulled into a Tim Hortons a couple of days ago and I saw a younger single father—well, maybe he wasn't single. He was by himself. He was taking his two kids out of the minivan, about a 2007 Chrysler minivan made in Windsor, and he went in, dragged the kids in and bought some coffee. As I watched him walk in with his two kids, I figured: That's the guy we should be asking, because he's balancing his budget. He's making every dollar stretch to afford his van, to afford his home. We don't need to be paying \$1,500 a day for messiahs to come and rescue this province. Take some direction from real people, is my message to the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Two? I was looking for another 20, Speaker. Thank you very much, Speaker. Not much time. So little time; so many things to cover.

First of all, thank you to the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Ottawa–Orléans, Nipissing and Essex for their comments on my address today.

One talked about job creation. The member for Ottawa–Orléans mentioned job creation. So did the member for Nipissing. Yeah, let's talk about job creation. I never got into that because I'd like to get more time. Maybe I can get another 20 minutes on this too.

We are prepared to bring 200,000 apprenticeship positions to this province, solving, or helping to solve, number one, a jobs crisis, private sector job creation that needs to be a priority of this government, which is not a priority, in spite of what their rhetoric might be.

Secondly, it will solve a challenge in the skilled trades field, where there's a shortage of people that is growing every day because you see what's happening, Speaker: The average journeyman is probably somewhere around my age, which is too old to be expected to be carrying the ball over the next many, many years. We need to bring young people into the trades to ensure that we have the

skilled people as our economy evolves and, hopefully, gets out of this mess, perhaps when these guys get defeated and the province starts rolling again. So we're offering to create 200,000 positions. See, today, it's another sellout to the unions by this government. The unions control all those positions.

**1650**

Apprenticeship ratios today: You have to have three journeymen for one apprentice. Even if you were a small ma-and-pa operation and you wanted to bring your son in as an electrician, if you only had two employees you couldn't, because you can't even meet the ratios to bring your own son into your own business under this Liberal regime. It's sad, and it's got to change. Tim Hudak will change it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Before I ask for further debate, I'd like to remind all members of the House to address their comments to the chair, and if they're referring to another member to please address them by the name of their riding, not their personal name.

Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and, if I may, I will be splitting my time with the honourable member for Hamilton Mountain.

These are what are called our inaugural speeches. It certainly feels great to be a part of the assembly, to have this opportunity. I look across the aisle at the new member for Windsor West. I applaud her and her comments today. I know she certainly feels passionately about the issues affecting our region, Essex county.

C'est vraiment un plaisir d'être ici comme député pour mon comté, ma circonscription d'Essex; c'est vraiment un honneur. J'aimerais dire merci à toute ma famille et à toutes les personnes qui m'ont aidé chaque jour durant notre campagne.

Thank you, first and foremost, to the members of my community, to Essex county. They've seen me, since 2005, as a New Democratic candidate federally in my first campaign, and coming in third place, but with a good amount of support, I think the message was: "You're new. Keep at it. We hear you. We know you're passionate, but let's work on some of your issues." I did keep at it. I stayed connected with my community. I was able to connect with a variety of associations and groups that are working on a whole litany of issues in Essex county, and specifically my riding of Essex. I'll talk a little bit about those issues.

But, first and foremost, those people sent me here with a mandate and with their trust, and it is something that I honour, respect and carry with me each and every day that I walk into this wonderful place.

I would be really remiss—I'd be in a lot of trouble too, Mr. Speaker—if I didn't thank my wife, Jenny, and my kids, Drake and Airika, who have been with me along this journey since 2005—the sacrifices that we have made and are continuing to make.

I know many members in this House who have young children, or even some older children make those same



sacrifices, and spouses who are at home. It's tough, but I think we all get it. It's important to be here. It is a privilege and an honour. It makes those times that much more special when we do return to our ridings. Isn't that what it's all about? To embrace your family, your friends and your community, and to really honour and cherish those moments when you're with everyone.

To my riding association, the members there that put a fantastic team together and countless election campaigns, and to my mom and dad who have been long-time activists in my riding—passionate. They've been married for 50 years this year. That was maybe the most wonderful moment of the election, on October 6, seeing them hug like they were 19 years old again. So Mom and Dad: Thank you. I love you. I really am honoured to hold this position.

I talked about my riding, Essex, and maybe some of the great things—for those of you who have never visited Essex, some of the great things we have. Certainly, it is Ontario and Canada's southernmost riding, provincially and federally, which means we do have a wonderful climate. It also means that sometimes at the end of December you can come and golf. I was speaking to one of the members from Nipissing or Nepean—Carleton—am I getting that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. Come on down. It may be an indication of some of the climate change issues that we're facing here, but it certainly is one of the benefits of our riding, that it is pretty nice in terms of the weather in the winter. It's pretty easy to get around.

Also, it's historically deep in tradition. Next year we'll be celebrating the bicentennial. The town of Amherstburg in my riding of Essex will feature one of the biggest parties, so to speak, at Fort Malden, where we actually fought back the Americans and stood our ground and kept this wonderful country, or part of our country, ours. The winefest is also in Amherstburg, Mr. Speaker. It's a wonderful event too, and I would invite you to come down and indulge in some of our local wineries. Fishing: incredible fishing in the Detroit River, Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair. Wonderful amenities. And of course, our proximity to the United States.

Those are some of the beautiful things, but we also in our region have many challenges. I don't think it will come as too much of a surprise to the members in this House to learn that Windsor and Essex county are the canary in the coal mine, so to speak, when it comes to the effects of the economic meltdown, the economic crisis, whatever you want to call it. I think it was a crisis created by greed, mismanagement, deregulation, privatization, globalization, and not simply, as some members would suggest, a spending issue or a spending problem, or by public services being too rich. I think a whole history, a whole litany of issues, comes into play to put us where we are today.

You know, this is something that we've seen in our region, being again so heavily or densely populated in manufacturing. It started when successive Liberal and

Conservative governments started signing free trade agreements, originally with the free trade agreement between the United States and Canada, its predecessor NAFTA, and now we're looking at the comprehensive economic trading agreement with the European Union. New Democrats have always stood with workers and with activists, folks who've studied these agreements and sounded the alarms on how this was going to continue to devastate so many important sectors of our economy.

We also have issues in my riding in terms of agriculture. It's an area where you'll find one of the most fertile soils. We can grow hundreds of varieties of plants, grains and oilseeds, and fruit trees. At one time it was abundant with those, but again, since the advent of ill-conceived trading agreements, we've seen massive orchards being ploughed over, farmers losing their family farms that in some cases have been in their families for generations, unable to compete against global forces and a government that simply doesn't want to respond and actually just continues along that path of neglect, I would say.

These are issues that are deep; they require a lot of—they're complex, I guess is the word. To simply state that if we continue to roll back corporate tax cuts it will solve these issues is again a measure of that blind faith that we see so many governments take.

I think, as I was mentioning to my friend, my colleague the honourable member for Toronto—Danforth, in good times, when the government coffers are full, you'll hear the calls, "Well, we have to roll back corporate taxes. We're overtaxing corporations. Look at how much money we've got in our provincial coffers," or federal coffers. And then when times are bad and the coffers are empty and you're crying poor, unable to fund some of the most basic services in this province—health care, education, child care, housing, poverty reduction—what do you say? "Well, the cupboards are bare. Let's reduce corporate taxes." So your remedy for each scenario is the same.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit respectfully that that just has not worked, and I would point to a wonderful article on April 6, just prior to the federal election, in the *Globe and Mail* by Karen Howlett. It states, "Corporate Tax Cuts Don't Spur Growth" An analysis reveals that even the federal Liberals were questioning their long-standing tradition of blind, across-the-board corporate tax cuts.

**1700**

So, Mr. Speaker, I think you can sense that I'll be moving towards that agenda. Our caucus's concerted effort will be focused towards trying to find some common rationale there. I'm sure it makes sense to some of the members across the way. I'm sure, deep down in their hearts, they know that it will be the right thing to do. In fact, it will be the only thing you can do, because everything else hasn't worked yet.

We're certainly prepared to work together with you. We don't need to embarrass you into it. We don't need to say, "Ha, ha. We were right; you were wrong." Let's just



do the right thing on behalf of the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. I appreciate the time given.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Did he indicate he was sharing his time?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** He did. Okay. Thank you very much.

I now have the opportunity of recognizing the member for Hamilton Mountain.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to my seatmate, the member from Essex, Taras Natyshak, for sharing his time with me today.

I'm proud to have asked my first question in the House this morning. Now it is my honour to address this House with my maiden speech.

This has been an amazing journey for me to this point. First, I would like to thank the residents of Hamilton Mountain for placing their faith and trust in my ability to serve in this House by representing their needs and their concerns. Their overwhelming show of support is not something that I will take lightly, and I promise them that I will continue to work hard and to hold the current government accountable to all Ontarians.

I would like to take the time also, Mr. Speaker, to thank my partner and my best friend, Mike, for being my pillar of strength during the campaign and before that and for supporting me each and every day. I know that I can count on you, and I love you so much.

My daughter, Destinee: She's my pride and joy. We have faced so many tough times as we've grown up together. I'm so proud of the young woman that she has become, and I know that if we continue to work hard, we will both be role models for the many young women in our community. With hard work and determination, we can be and do anything that we want to do in this life.

My family—my mother; my father; my brother, David; my sisters, Nicole and Lorraine; their partners and their families: Thank you for the guidance and support that you have given me over the years. Your encouragement and pride in me has allowed me the courage to continue forward.

During my campaign, Mr. Speaker, I had an absolutely brilliant team. I had a campaign manager who kept a smooth ship running forward and sailing smooth every single day. Our campaign was positive, fun and always full of momentum. There are so many people who were on my team, but of course I can only name a few and don't want to leave anybody behind. Steffanie Greene, Lynden George, Cam Robertson, Tiffany Kowalyshyn, Sharon Brae, and so many more—people who were there from the absolute first thing in the morning to the very end of the night, making sure that we were contacting as many people as possible. I could go on forever with such a positive group—and the group hugs that we had at the end of the night were definitely a common occurrence. So thank you, thank you, thank you so much to each and every one of them.

Mr. Speaker, as I previously said, I was sent here with a very clear message from my constituents. They were not happy with the current government. I won 196 polls out of 210. That is no small message for you. I believe it's time that Mr. McGuinty start to work with our caucus and that we all work together. It's a different day, it's a different time, and they weren't very quiet about the message.

Our leader, Andrea Horwath, has put us on a very clear plan that puts people first. We need jobs in our community. We need to hold up small businesses and make sure that we have a plan to keep them in business. We need to make sure that our families can make ends meet and put food on the dinner tables.

My colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin has started that ball rolling with his bill to remove the HST from home heating, but there is so much more to be done, Mr. Speaker. We need to work on health care, wait times in our emergency rooms and for important surgeries, the shortages that we're facing with doctors and the thousands of nurses who have been dismissed over the last couple of years.

While I was knocking on doors, I met a woman who had been lying on her couch for six months, waiting for an important surgery for hip replacement. That's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. Six months lying on the couch, and that's an emergency surgery? Something needs to change.

We need to address our seniors, and not just with assistive devices but with a better plan. We need so many more hours of home care and more support services, things that would help, like helping with the groceries, shovelling the snow or cutting the grass. These are the kinds of programs that would ensure that they could stay in their homes—seniors who can barely afford to keep healthy food on the table.

I met an elderly woman who had her disabled son living with her. He was also in his late 50s or early 60s. They invited me into their home. There she is with an oxygen mask on her face, and she's telling me that she had to cancel her life insurance plan because she can't afford her hydro bill. These are the kinds of things that our families are facing. She doesn't have a choice if she has to have oxygen, or what time of day she can wear that mask.

These are the heartbreaking stories that I heard from my residents every day while knocking on doors. This is a brief touch of what my residents are facing on Hamilton Mountain. These are the issues that they're concerned about. These are the reasons that they voted for change on Hamilton Mountain.

Mr. Speaker, before I decided to run in this election, I was the assistant to a city councillor, Scott Duvall. Daily, I listened to families who could not make ends meet, families who could not afford to pay their rent, seniors and single folks who had been on subsidized housing wait-lists only to be told that they were still going to be waiting for years and years more. Three to 10 years for subsidized housing? That's unacceptable.



We need to input plans to fix these problems. We need a government that is going to act on their behalf. We need to ensure that families have suitable safe housing. Ontario Works recipients who are living below poverty and eating from food banks that can't keep up with the needs of our community, special diet allowances that have been retracted from people who need it the most: These are the reasons and the people that sent me here. These are the concerns that drove me to knock on more than 10,000 doors and make sure the residents knew that there was an alternative to the administration that they had just grown used to.

Voter turnout in this last election, Mr. Speaker, was at an all-time low. People have given up. They think that no one is listening. They think that it doesn't matter who is elected, that their voices and their opinions do not count. I'm here to let them know that October 6 was a new day for the residents of Hamilton Mountain. I do care. I will make sure that their voices are heard. I urge them to contact my office and speak with myself or my staff.

I'll also take the moment—in my office, working right now, are Steffanie Greene and Patrick McCoy, and they're going to be my full-time staff in that office, listening and working with me to ensure that the work gets done, the phone calls are returned, and when the times get tough, people do have an ear of someone who cares. These are the commitments that I made on the doors, and these are the commitments that I made to the residents of Hamilton Mountain.

1710

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this time today. I really enjoyed being able to address this House and letting them know exactly what Hamilton Mountain residents expect of this upcoming provincial government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you to the members for Essex and Hamilton Mountain. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I just want to welcome the two new members from Hamilton Mountain and Essex. I listened to their maiden speeches and I welcome them into the Legislature. It's a fascinating place. As you stay here, you will learn that we have all sorts of things happening in here. There are moments when we all agree and talk to each other in a friendly way, and there is sometimes heated debate in here as well.

It's my third term here, and I've learned, over the years, just by gaining experience. All I can say is, you'll learn by experience, by attending committee meetings, by doing other jobs and dealing with constituents in your ridings. So I congratulate you for getting elected and coming to the Legislature. As I said, it's a fascinating place, and it takes time to learn how everything works. When I first came here, I was a bit confused as to how everything worked. It's a different level of government and it's a very nice place. You'll find a lot about how this Legislature works and the rules. As we get further into debate in the months to come, I'm sure that you'll participate in the debates and you'll enjoy your time here.

I enjoy my time here. As I said, it's a great experience. You grow as the months and years go by. Just again, I want to welcome you here and wish you all the best in the time that you're here in the months and years to come. So welcome to the Legislature. I look forward to your contribution. I appreciated your maiden speeches. The months to come will be very interesting. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

*Applause.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, everybody. It's so nice to be back.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Minister Gerretsen, for welcoming me back.

I'd like to comment on the inaugural speeches of the two members. It's great to see you get up and participate in the Legislature. We're welcoming you and your input. I know that the member from Essex spoke very passionately about issues in his riding and the time for change, and the taxes he talked about, and working together. We were very proud to support the NDP motion last week, to send a message to the government. They chose not to listen—well, so far, anyway; we can always hope. But to give that relief, removing the HST off the home heating bills—because we both know that that is very critical in our ridings. I can tell you, in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock it's going to be a really rough winter on a lot of people. It is very serious, and the government should have listened to that NDP bill that was brought forward and supported it. We won that vote in the Legislature.

The member from Hamilton Mountain—I had the pleasure of attending a debate with her during the election, sponsored by the RNAO in Hamilton. So we got to know each other a little bit there when we were on different sides of some of the issues, but today you saw her speak very passionately about health care and some examples from her area of things that need to be changed in the health care sector, and that is very, very true. How we deliver health care is not providing the services that the people need. She's going to be a very strong advocate for the health care sector in the Legislature. So I hope the Liberals will listen to some of the ideas.

I can say again that we all want to see people stay in their homes this winter, whether it be the cost of home heating that's going to be challenging to them or just the cost of getting health care services in their homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd first like to welcome two of the nine new members we have to the Legislature. The member from Essex and the member from Hamilton Mountain will be a great contribution to our efforts in this House in the upcoming months.

These members come from diversified backgrounds. All our new members come from different fields of



Ontario, whether it be agriculture, labour, business, a profession, you name it. They come from every direction. I think we have a balanced and effective squad who are going to be very effective.

I'd also like to point out that I was very pleased last week to stand up with the official opposition to have two bills that are helping the people of Ontario. We are working together, and I'm sure that even the government side is going to work with us on certain bills that are certainly going to benefit the people of this province.

I can say that over the years that I've been in this House, I've watched, unfortunately, a lot of partisan politics take place, a lot of very poor committee work because it was stacked against us. We brought forth a lot of good proposals from both the official opposition and the third party, which were squashed because the individuals on the committee had their marching orders from the corner office.

This is over. I was quite shocked to hear several government members talk about a "major minority." There is no such animal as a major minority. It is either a majority or a minority. It's not a major minority. Get used to it. You're going to have to work with us, whether you like it or not. I hope you do because I think we can get a lot of good things done if we put aside all the past nonsense that went on in here. I think it's going to be a positive working environment, and thank you for all your co-operation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Okay, we have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I congratulate the member for Essex and the member for Hamilton Mountain on their election victories. They are making their maiden speeches today and they'll find out over the years that this is a great place to be.

I wanted again to speak to the people from Ottawa-Orléans. The city of Ottawa has in their official plan sustainability as one of their major goals—balanced development. We have 0.5 jobs per household in Orléans. We have—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I just have to remind the member that if he can relate his comments back to the speeches that were made by the NDP members, that would be helpful.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker, and they will be related to jobs, the speech from the throne and what the members have said.

We have 0.5 jobs per household in Orléans and we have 1.65 jobs per household in Kanata. This was working out fairly well because there were a lot of jobs downtown. We've got a new light rail coming to the city of Ottawa. What happens? A million square feet of office building right in the middle of our city is vacated, and so the jobs are very important—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, following up on your last comment, I think this was supposed to be a response to

the two new members and not a tour of Ottawa, so I'm hoping that we can—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I appreciate that. I asked the member for Ottawa-Orléans if he was going to relate his comments back. He said he was. I'm prepared to listen to him and I'll give him a couple of extra seconds to listen to him as he brings it back to respond to the members who spoke.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker. Sustainability is important, and we're talking about that in this House often. That's good for people who are coming in here, to know about the sustainability of our cities. This province has put \$600 million into light rail transit through the centre of our city, and that was going to be great to get people from the suburbs into the middle of town to their jobs, but now we have 10,000 jobs that are being moved to Kanata, away from the centre of our city, away from that transitway and away from the families who provide—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Your time is up. Thank you very much.

I'll return to one of the New Democrats, who has two minutes to respond. The member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you. I think maybe what the honourable member across the way was getting to is the need for public transit across this province. It sounds like the riding of Ottawa-Orléans has a wonderful public transit system. You know, public transit, high-speed rail or higher-speed rail, is an issue that—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Talk about your own topic.  
1720

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Well, it is on my own topic, because we would love that in our neck of the woods, and it's something that we will call on the provincial government to make a substantial investment in. It has often been said that the province ends at London. Well, we feel that effect in the lack of public transit, in the lack of access to transit. Maybe the member is outlining some of the benefits of being from Ottawa, which are that you get loads of money for public transit. But if you're from southwestern Ontario—

*Interjection:* Nothing.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** —you get nothing. I'm pleased to talk on public transit issues, and I'm pleased to talk on job issues at any opportunity.

One of the issues that we talked about earlier today—I forget at which point it was—the corporate tax cuts and the agenda that seems to be pushed by the government here. In our area, just for instance, you know what we do have? We have a British Petroleum, or BP, refinery—many of you may not know that—down in the Windsor area. It's in the honourable member from Windsor West's riding, actually. They're not really the best corporate citizen, if you haven't noticed lately, and they get massive corporate tax cuts from various levels of government. You know what? In fact, Mr. Speaker, I've never even seen them sponsor a Timbits hockey team, or a soccer team. Even your local Timmy's does that. Let's



look at the agenda here, when we're sponsoring massive companies like BP instead of helping small businesses who create jobs in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** First of all, I just want to commend all the members who returned, but particularly the new members. It is refreshing to hear the enthusiasm of my friend from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. Did I get it right, sir?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That's me.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** That's you. That's who I mean—you.

I want to share his observations, because to all of you who are new, it is a bit exciting to be in this place for the first day, to walk in past people like Oliver Mowat and John A. Macdonald and people who we learned about in the history books out there, and coming in here. There is a sense of grandeur and awe to this place that sometimes I wish we had elevated our rhetoric to do that.

I always find, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about throne speeches—I'm trying to imagine what the throne speech was like when John A. Macdonald, in this House, started to talk about the need for a national railway—and the scandals with John Abbott, and those things that were underpinning that.

We have become—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Yes, I know that. I'm sorry; I'm sharing my time with the member from Ottawa Centre, Mr. Speaker. I neglected to say that.

When we go on these great, grand visions, there is so much machinery politically to tear apart and shred a major new idea that I'm hoping that the enthusiasm of many of the new members and their idealism will not get lost in this place. I want to tell you that it's been pretty positive and affirming for new members from all parties to see so many new faces here. I want to commend them and welcome them, and I hope they don't get caught up in some of the excessive partisanship that sometimes pervades this place.

It's interesting, and I don't say this to take cheap shots, but you know, under the previous Conservative government, debt went up to 40% of GDP, which I think is the highest debt ratio we had. There were a number of contributing factors to that, including the bust of the tech bubble—not something that the party opposite could have done much about, and I'm sure many of us who were in opposition at the time blamed the government of the day for all of the consequential fallout of that.

We are now going through the most turbulent economic times in the global economy, where not only are jobs disappearing around the world, but some governments in Western Europe who have long been powerhouses of the global economy are on the verge of insolvency. This is something that would have been hard to imagine. As a matter of fact, in 2008, when those of you who ran for this office before I came in here—if someone had said at an all-candidates meeting in 2007,

“What are you going to do in 2008 when an energy price spike, interest rates and the collapse of the US housing market send the world into the worst global recession in our lifetimes?”, most of us would have probably stared blankly into the camera, because I don't think anyone could have expected how much the world was going to change within the first 12 months of the last mandate.

We are in a position of incredible turbulence. We're also going through, and maybe this will—and you may notice that my tone in my speech is very not-partisan. It's a bit of an offering to try and have a more elevated discussion, because we're living in a different economy. My friend from Leeds—Grenville earlier mentioned issues of ratios. Quite frankly, these are relatively small potatoes. They are consequential to many people, but within the dynamic of a knowledge economy. So let's look at what's happening and what we're trying to address with the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, and maybe we'll invite a more elevated discussion.

There a crisis of capital in the world: 4.4% of companies in Canada are creating almost 50% of our jobs. Our manufacturing sector, which we heavily invested in and, with the federal government, subsidized—to be quite frank, to the credit of this government—has maintained 400,000 jobs and seen 9,000 jobs come back to the auto sector.

Agriculture is terribly important to us, and we need to continue to invest in innovation in those areas. We know that agriculture and manufacturing are now part of the stable, slow-growth parts of our economy, and that's true in France, Germany, Italy and all across the United States.

If we're all honest with each other, we know that knowledge- and innovation-based companies are highly sensitive to available capital and talent. So when we ran—and for me, Mr. Speaker, the two most important things in our platform were our tuition commitment, especially for young people coming out of high school within four years, to try and upskill our workforce, to build on the 200,000 spaces that we had created and add 60,000 more and try to accelerate it. We have improved apprenticeships. We have gone from about 60,000 people to 120,000 people in a year, and I think that we would share with the opposition parties an agreement that we have to probably double that again to meet the labour shortages there. So, rather than carping about measuring who has done better on that, we can acknowledge that we built a foundation.

I was with Bill Davis last night, former Premier Davis. We talked a lot about the development of the college system, which was revolutionary in the 1970s, to meet another economic need.

The other thing is venture capital. As you know, we established the Ontario venture capital fund, and we've been working on things like life sciences, early stage development. We're looking at tax incentives to liberate capital, because we know that in almost every major global economy right now, for start-up and grow-up new venture firms, those that are generating about 50% of our



jobs, we have a capital shortage. Surely, between all of us, if we take some inspiration, Mr. Speaker, from the newer members of each of our caucuses—these are problems that are not Liberal problems; they're not Conservative problems; they're not NDP problems. If you actually look at the real debt-ratio challenge, for about 30 years in Ontario, going way back to the 1980s and maybe before, the governments in this Legislature traditionally borrowed at higher rates as a percentage of GDP than was wise. And for 30 years of small recessions and periods of boom, governments were resilient about that. Now we're coming to a point of reconciliation because we have a global capital crisis.

What are our strengths? We have the most educated workforce in the Western world. We have, over the last 30 years together in Ontario, built the best education system in the Western world, and I think this government deserves credit for having accelerated that and pulled that together. We have built—all parties—the best banking system in the world and the most stable banking system in the world, and that's not the property of people who live in the south, where I live in Toronto Centre. I lived so far north; it was way past northwestern Ontario. That has a lot to do with miners in Sudbury and the forestry industry in northwestern Ontario, because it was our resource industries that created the foundation for this capital. Now our challenge is to get bankers and financiers to invest in the new generations of businesses and use the platforms of Lakehead University and other places to use those knowledge centres—Nipissing University in North Bay and other places—to launch new regional economic policies.

Do you think that there is a message, as my friend the Deputy Speaker pointed out earlier, for us to be caught up in trying to find three or four or five extraordinarily positive things that we have in common and for a few years, at least until we get out of this period of incredible global turbulence, to try and come together on those things?

1730

We had a fundamental disagreement about the HST. We believe, as we do with the federal Conservative Party, with Jim Flaherty, as we do with the NDP in Nova Scotia, that the HST was a critical need for change. It brought down the marginal taxation rate in this province to make it competitive. Had we not done that and if we started dismantling it—you've taken it from a strategic and tough decision that I was proud to have been part of and ran on twice and explained with great difficulty to people on their home heating bill why this was so critical.

I used to work with Jim Flaherty's chief of staff. He and I were business partners, so I got to know the federal finance minister. I have quite a lot of respect for him and I have a lot of respect for what the NDP did in Nova Scotia, where they recognized that.

If you don't believe the HST is a good thing, Mr. Speaker, and why this government isn't backing off on it—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No, don't talk to Darrell Dexter. Go and—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No, can I finish, please? Please don't interrupt your own members.

Mr. Speaker, watch what's going to happen in British Columbia now. You want to see what's going to happen. One of my childhood best friends is president of the University of British Columbia. Go and talk to researchers and those start-up companies about what's going to happen to their ability to raise capital. They've just driven the marginal investment rate in BC through the roof and they've now got a competitive disadvantage.

So let's try to be a little more sophisticated. Let's try to move beyond that. The Leader of the Opposition is an economist and knows that consumption taxes are a good thing and this was a good move—imperfect, but critical to many of the jobs we've kept here today.

So Mr. Speaker, I look forward to bigger ideas to solve bigger problems. I'd now like to turn it over to my friend from Ottawa Centre. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** And I recognize the member for Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for his comments about the innovation and productivity agenda and how it's important in terms of growing our economy in the 21st-century context.

There are many, many challenges ahead, no doubt about it. I think I mentioned before, Speaker, that if you look at globally what's going on around us, it's pretty astonishing; it's pretty awesome, I would say—and I'm not saying that in a positive way; I'm saying that it's grand, the collapse of financial institutions in the United States that took place two years ago, starting in 2008, and the impact it had on our economy and the US economy—which, by the way, they still have not been able to recover from.

Now, the kinds of challenges European nations are having within the eurozone—it's like a domino effect. Country by country, they're going through some incredible things which have a significant impact on us as an economy—when I say “us,” I mean Canada, but of course Ontario as well—but also, the impact it's having on the US economy, which is still stuck in a vortex somewhere and it's not able to recover. That has a huge consequence on us. Those who are from the bordering communities can attest to that, given that we are traditionally a manufacturing province.

So that raises the point, in that context, as to what we need to do. Where do we need to go in order to ensure that not only do we evolve our economy so that it can meet the challenges of the 21st century, but also, on an immediate basis, create jobs? So it's a two-pronged challenge. We've got a deficit in jobs right now and we need to make sure that we create meaningful jobs so that people have sustenance, so that people can look after themselves and their families, but also, on the second



prong, in the long-term aspect, we need to determine what kind of economy we're building.

Now, there are two things in this throne speech that speak to it. There are quite a few elements, but I will pick on two very important things that speak to both those sides, one being the short-term immediate relief that we need in order to ensure that we're creating jobs in our economy, sort of a boost to the economy; and the second, of course, being the long-term planning.

The short-term is—and I spoke this morning on how the healthy home renovation tax credit is a good example of that. Here you've got a policy idea which not only deals with a very grand societal, demographic issue that is right here at our doorstep and is going to become only bigger and more challenging; i.e. the aging population. Baby-boomers are becoming seniors. They worked very hard in building this economy and now, as they get older—and I think all of us probably have a relative who we can speak of, or some members are in that category themselves—we need to make sure that we look after them and we do so in a manner that helps to take pressure off of our health care system.

Now, I think that everybody knows this, and people watching at home know this as well: We spend the most money on our health care system. I believe the number was 42% of our programming dollars are spent on health care. That's the biggest chunk, if you look at the pie, and that number will only continue to grow unless we do something radically different. The big portion of that spending is going to be looking after our seniors.

We need to make a couple of policy decisions: Do we continue to just look after our seniors in an acute care setting, in a long-term-care setting, which is extremely expensive, or do we find other meaningful ways to make them healthy? One of the best ways to continue to keep them healthy, which is more economical to the system as well, is to keep our seniors at home, to make sure that our seniors continue to get the care that they need at home, as opposed to going to a hospital setting, which is very expensive, or going to a long-term-care facility, which is very expensive not only in terms of the real dollars, but it takes a toll on the senior as well because a long-term-care facility—with all due respect to hard-working nurses and personal support workers who work in the long-term-care setting—is still an institutional setting. It does not have the same feel as a home.

So what the healthy homes renovation tax credit is doing is essentially saying to seniors, "Look, let us help you, as a government, so that you can continue to live in your own home," and as long as we can prolong that process, the better it is for their health and the better it is for our health care system.

The immediate relief is also the job aspect. The renovation sector is a big one in our economy, and by ensuring that we are providing a tax credit, it gives that incentive, a very targeted incentive, to our seniors or their loved ones to make the changes they need to make in their home, that they will go buy products from suppliers,

they will get construction workers to come into their own home and make certain changes that create real jobs.

That's at an immediate level, and I think that's just one example that we are looking at and have proposed, through Bill 2, which again I hope all members will support, because it's tangible, it's meaningful and it really helps the economic situation, but also, more broadly, the issue around demographics. No doubt we need to do more when it comes to dealing with our seniors, our aging population, but this is a good start.

The second aspect we need to look at, and I think the minister was alluding to that earlier, is the long-term economic evolution as to the kind of economy that we are building in Ontario. That has to be done through a highly skilled, highly educated workforce. That can only be done by making sure—and when I talk about the education system, I'm talking about from junior kindergarten to Ph.D., the full spectrum—that from the moment that our children are able to get an education, which is through age four in a formal education setting, we get the best education system to them, because that is going to prepare them for the new economy. That is going to give them the foundation they need to be able to be innovative, to be creative and meet the challenges that we need to meet in the new economy.

The McGuinty government's commitment to support full-day kindergarten—I have to tell you how excited and happy I was when I saw both the official opposition and the third party finally coming out in support of full-day kindergarten in their platforms. Thank you. Thank you for recognizing that that was an important policy, that it is the right thing to do. I really hope that you believe it. I hope you didn't make that into a political decision because polling told you that it was really popular. I hope you made that decision because you recognize how important it is to help our children from the earliest age possible, hence lending your support to the full-day kindergarten program that was pioneered and championed by the Premier and by this government.

1740

But then, when we move on through our education system, we need to make sure that we are investing in our post-secondary; that we are not only providing good places to learn in our colleges and universities, but we are also providing the means to our students to be able to pursue the kind of education they want to get.

Let me speak to my community in Ottawa Centre. Carleton University, I'm very proud to say—I'm an alumnus myself—is part of Ottawa Centre. We have been making a tremendous amount of investment in Carleton University. Most recently, we invested \$25 million to build two new buildings, the River Building and the Canal Building—state-of-the-art, from an environmental point of view and from a sustainable perspective, but also in terms of the quality of this infrastructure, because it will result in better education for our students.

One of them, the River Building, is an engineering building; I just had the chance to go to the open house. The labs are just incredible, and you could see the



excitement among students. We're investing \$16 million in renovating and expanding the MacOdrum Library at Carleton University, another worthy investment.

But what I wanted to say very quickly in my limited time, Speaker, is that a 30% reduction in tuition fees for college and university students is another very meaningful way of ensuring that university education or college education is affordable for our students—that any young man or young woman who wants to go to a post-secondary education after finishing high school is able to do so. So reducing tuition fees by 30% is meaningful and is going to, again, build into that foundation of creating an innovative and creative economy in Ontario, which we very much need. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to respond to the member for Ottawa Centre, and I believe the member for Toronto Centre was speaking earlier on half of that.

I just want to comment on a couple things that he has talked about. One of them is the new seniors' healthy homes tax credit. You know, when I talk to people in my riding, they say, "So let me get this straight, Yak: If I spend \$10,000 that I don't have, I get \$1,500. But when I don't have the money, how can I spend it?" Well, that's not going to work. So right off the bat, he says, "Well, that doesn't apply to us; that only applies to the seniors that have some money." And he said, "Secondly, we're not mobility-challenged right now, but we are having trouble paying the oil bill."

Thirdly, then I talked to another person, and they said, "So this is for people who own their homes or rent their homes." And he said to me, "So why would I spend \$10,000 making improvements to someone else's asset? Yak, I could be dead next year, and what do I get for it? I'm out of the rental property, I've got a permanent home now somewhere, and the landlord gets to keep the asset." He says, "They just never really think about it."

It gets back to what I said earlier, Mr. Speaker: When your motivation for legislation—that's a rhyme, there—is always politics and political, then you get it wrong. Start thinking about the people and you will get it right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you for that. Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would also like to comment to the member's speech on the seniors' healthy homes renovation tax break. It's great initiative. I'm sure that you have the best interest at heart. Unfortunately, it's not enough. Like the other members said, how can these seniors put out money that they don't have?

In my riding, we're blue collar. Many of my seniors are on fixed incomes. They haven't had a raise in their pension in many, many years. Now we're seeing, "Here, we'll give you money if you spend money." Well, they don't have money to spend. So it's not going to do much to keep them in their home.

There are better ways, like I was talking about. We can make sure that they have better home care hours, that we're putting more hours into them staying in their home and taking them out of the long-term-care facilities. We'll keep them in their homes longer. It will make more room in our long-term-care facilities and ease up our rooms in the hospitals.

If we save money—\$150 a day will keep \$1,500 a day out of the hospital. Big difference, right? Weigh the options. Let's see what we're looking at here. If we look at the big picture instead of one little piece, we might be able to make a difference for not just our seniors but our wait times in our hospitals and our lack of hospital beds. These are the kinds of things that we need to look at, not saving money from money that they don't have in the first place.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm happy to comment on the speeches made by the members from Toronto Centre and Ottawa Centre. I begin by first talking a little bit about—I think I've got the name right—the healthy home tax credit for seniors that we have introduced. Hopefully we'll be debating and passing it in not too long a time-frame.

Some of the criticism coming from the opposite side of this healthy home tax credit for seniors is that seniors do not have the money to invest in this particular program. I would say, by way of example, if we only look to the very recently introduced and very successful home energy retrofit piece, which was a very, very popular program and was matched by the federal Conservative government as well as the provincial Liberal government, I know that a lot of seniors took up that offer in terms of energy retrofits when it came to their home. So I'm hoping that some of the members opposite will remember that when it comes time to vote on whether or not they're going to support seniors when it comes to this healthy home tax credit.

Speaker, some of the other discussion has focused on the single sales tax and what occurred in BC—of course, a very different circumstance. We do believe on this side of the House that the decision in BC is going to be a windfall for the province of Ontario. The way that I talk about the single sales tax in Ontario is simply this: We've got a federal Conservative Prime Minister who quite possibly is the most right-wing Prime Minister we've ever had, the most predisposed ideologically against tax hikes, it's fair to say, and yet when our government here in Ontario introduced the single sales tax, the federal Conservative government, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, passed federal legislation to allow us to do it. Along with passing federal legislation, the Conservatives also transferred \$4 billion to the Liberals in the province of Ontario. So if somebody is in favour of tax hikes, I guess it means that the federal Conservatives are as well. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question and comment. I turn to the member for Durham.



**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have listened very carefully to the speakers today on the Liberal side: the member from Ottawa Centre, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I'd like to put things in reference here a little bit. It's important to look at what other commentators are saying. I'm going to read a couple of these—

**Interjection:** The Toronto Star?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, they're not out of the Star. This one here is out of the Toronto Sun. I'm quoting Don Drummond here. "Even to achieve the deficits I'm talking about, they have to slightly tighten spending growth relative to what it's been in the past," he said in an interview. "It's a lot higher than people are thinking, and it's a graphic illustration that there is a structural deficit in Ontario." That's what Don Drummond said, and I'm quoting the article here.

I've got another one, too, that's very important. This is from the Canadian Council of Chief Executives. This is what they're saying about Premier McGuinty as well as the finance minister: "The single most important thing you could do to secure the future of the province is to rally your caucus and the population of Ontario behind a declaration of war."

"Wars require political support, but they also require strength of will, determination and strategy. I'm not suggesting a war on Ottawa, by the way. I am proposing a war on the provincial debt, before it is too late."

Who from the Canadian Council of Chief Executives said this?

1750

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** John Manley.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It was John Manley, who is a former finance minister for the Liberal government in Ottawa.

So even the very brightest people are saying that Premier McGuinty and Dwight Duncan cannot manage the deficit. Here's what they say: that the Ontario "government has a strong track record of fiscal prudence and discipline." That's what Dwight Duncan said.

"The unfortunate reality ... is that this government's fiscal record has been nothing short of a disaster," and Tuesday's budget showed that the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very, very much.

I'll return now to the member for Ottawa Centre, who has two minutes to reply to the questions and comments.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My gratitude again to the members from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Hamilton Mountain, Thunder Bay-Atikokan and—my favourite member—Durham, who I did miss while we were off, because I like hearing him totally off topic on various things. But that's the nature of this place.

I want to go back to the theme, because it's kind of unfortunate that nobody spoke about the broader theme of the throne speech that I was talking about, which goes down to the times that we're living in. You can be partisan, and yes, this is the place to be partisan. You can pick on this initiative or that initiative, put your twists

and turns to it and have your version of whatever you want to accomplish. I appreciate that; I accept that it's part of the democratic process to do that.

But I think that when it comes to the fundamental issues around the global economy, when it comes to the issues around the kind of creativity and innovation that we need in rebuilding our economy, there should be very little disagreement, and I wish I would have heard a little bit more about that, what we need to do.

We all work together, and we're open to ideas, but I think we need to have that discussion, though. We need to have those discussions about what we need to do when it comes to the global challenges that we are facing right now. This is serious stuff.

This is not of your making or our making. This is something we're inheriting, as to what happened with the financial services sector in the United States and its impact, or what's happening within Europe, within the euro zone, and the impact on our economy.

I think it's our collective wisdom which should guide us as we work hard to ensure that we put in the right set of fundamentals and build the right foundation for the new economy that we need. We need to work together to make that happen. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm not quite sure if it's a point of order, but I'd like to introduce some guests who have come to join us from Windsor. We have Dr. John Strasser, the president, and Patti France, the VP academic, of our local college, St. Clair College. They are here today for our college day. They'll be meeting with some of the MPPs and representing our local college. Thank you for coming.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It was not a point of order, but we do appreciate the introduction of your guests and we welcome them to the House. Thank you very much for that.

Further debate?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** We need somebody to debate for a short period of time, so I'll do that. Mr. Speaker, I have only a short period of time here, and I'm helping out my friends in the Conservative opposition who would like to have a full speech, a full debate, later on, so I want to help them out.

While I'm up on my feet, I do want to point out a dilemma I have sitting on this side of the House, listening to members of the Conservative caucus. The first half of the question period, the government gets berated for spending too much. And then, once the clock hits about 29, 28, 27 minutes, the members of the opposition get up and demand that the government spend more money.

Then there are the members' statements. I listen carefully to them, because they're very important. They get up and ask in that statements that we spend more money.

Then the petitions: My good friend the opposition House leader was making a plea today for the government to spend some money, and I agreed with him on that occasion—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Speaker, this isn't a point of order.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm not on a point of order.

**Interjection:** He's speaking.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm speaking.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** To clarify, the Minister of the Environment has the floor, and I'll return to the Minister of the Environment. He's got about five minutes before we adjourn the House at 6 o'clock.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** He had a very good point he was making, I thought, today. He was asking the government to spend more money on a matter that was very important to his constituency.

The point I'm making when we talk about the throne debate—we are on a throne debate—is that the government has to find that balance.

I listen to my friends in the New Democratic Party as well, who are eager to remove the opportunity for \$350 million worth of funding coming into the government every year to be ceased, because they want another tax cut. Now, I can remember the days when my friends in the NDP, as Tom Walkom would say, were opposed to tax cuts and they understood the need for revenue. Today, no doubt, their critic would have been in the hallway saying that the government should spend more money on the environment, despite the fact that the government of Ontario has increased funding for the Ministry of the Environment by 42% since we entered office in the year 2003—42% since we took office.

Now, I think they may have been looking at the old days. In the 1990s, they used to have the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Energy together, and the clean water commission. That looked like there was a lot of money being spent on the environment.

I remember when the same government separated the environment and the energy ministries. I was suggesting that the budget of the Ministry of the Environment was diminished. That was mischievous because I knew at that time that, really, there was still an allocation of funding for the clean water commission; there was still an allocation of money separately for the energy ministry and the environment ministry, but opposition members tend to be mischievous. That's why when I hear members talk about that today, I know that they'll want to have the true facts, and that is that there has been an increase in funding for the Ministry of the Environment since 2003, when we assumed office, by some 42%. I think that's exceedingly important.

But I want to get over this dilemma. If every question that came from the Conservative caucus said "save money," then I would say, "Well, you know something, they're consistent." But when half of the time they're yelling at us to save money, and the other half they're beseeching us to spend more money, I wonder where they're going with all of this.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We're not saying spend more; we're saying spend it differently.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Differently, on your priorities; I know that you would say that—just as with the southwestern Ontario economic development body that we are establishing. Now, I know the member for Brock-

ville would be in favour of that; he understands it. Yet I saw other members of the Conservative caucus getting up and panning it today. I'll be penning a letter to Senator Runciman, who has landed in paradise as a senator at this time, a former member of this House, suggesting that some of the Conservative members don't want to have this particular body, which will allocate funding for regional development in southwestern Ontario and ensure that it continues in eastern Ontario.

Another dilemma I have is this: The member for Belleville and Quinte was up with a bill that was suggesting that farmers would not be able to use the land the way they saw fit. I was looking at—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Hillier.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** —Mr. Hillier, first of all, the member for Lanark—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** And Jack MacLaren.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** —and the member for Mississippi Mills and saying, "Now, I had always heard the landowners say that farmers should be able to use the property whatever way they saw fit." Yet we have another member of the caucus who would prevent them from doing so.

So I think it's time for a major policy gathering in the Conservative Party so that they can decide—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Yes, a think tank.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, a think tank's going a little far—a gathering of the Conservative Party so that they can get done what they have to.

Anyway, I want to compliment the Acting Speaker, who always does a marvellous job, a good friend of mine. He looks superb in that outfit, the penguin outfit, that he has on today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you for that as well.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 39, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

1800

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### HOSPITALS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Cambridge has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given on November 28 on hospital expansion projects by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The member for Cambridge has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and either the Minister of Health or the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health may reply for up to five minutes.

I recognize the member for Cambridge.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's question period produced a great deal of disappointment from this side of the House. I was thoroughly upset with the quality of answers that the Minister of Health was providing this



House. The minister did not understand the question that I was asking and then stated incorrectly that the information the House requested from this government was available online.

Mr. Speaker, the question that I asked yesterday was not whether or not the expansion was moving forward. Instead, I asked the minister if she would be tabling on behalf of her government a detailed plan that outlines the costs, a timeline for completion, and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the hospital expansion projects promised before and during the 2011 general election.

Choosing to ignore such a simple question, the minister thought that I was asking about funding for Cambridge Memorial Hospital and stated that the hospital expansion project was moving forward for Cambridge. I don't need the minister to promise the Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion again. We all know that it will eventually happen. We don't know when. They have done this promising over the last eight years. I'm looking for the minister to table a detailed plan on how the hospital expansion projects across Ontario, not just in Cambridge, will proceed.

In addition, on the minister's supplementary answer, she said that all the information that the House has required the government to table is on Infrastructure Ontario's website. However, the website that the minister speaks of does not have the costs, it does not have a timeline for completion, and it does not offer any details about the government plans to pay for these projects: no dates, no figures and, most importantly, no accountability.

In addition, the minister stated yesterday that they cannot release numbers because it would affect the competition process. However, when determining what projects should be funded, the government must know how much they are estimating for each project.

They claim it is in the budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, I looked at the budget and Cambridge Memorial Hospital was not in it. I haven't been able to access the estimates for 2013 either. The motion is not seeking out nickels and cents, but rather estimates of the project costs.

In addition, if these hospital expansion costs have yet to be determined, then no project should have estimated costs; however, when my staff did research through newspaper articles, they found that certain projects were given these estimates. For example, Providence Care in Kingston is receiving \$350 million, whereas the new Vaughan hospital has no figures released. The member for Nickel Belt listed many examples of this last week.

All I'm asking this government to do is to table the plan that they say they already have. Why don't they take the next step and table that plan to this House? Mr. Speaker, it's time for the minister to stop passing the buck. Her government should follow the will of the House and table a detailed plan that outlines the costs, a timeline for completion, and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the

hospital expansion projects promised before and during the 2011 general election.

Yesterday, the Minister of Health could not provide me with the answers to the questions that I have been asking. Will the minister or the parliamentary secretary stand up today and answer such a simple question without being confused about whether her government will table a detailed plan for hospital expansions in the province of Ontario?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

In reply, I recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, the member for Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Speaker, and it's good to see you back in uniform today. Congratulations on your appointment as—what do we call this? The Assistant Deputy Speaker? I'm never quite sure. Anyway, it's great to see you in the chair.

To address the question, I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question and I would like to provide an explicit answer. Yes, we will provide the information to the Legislature, and yes—because the subtext in all of this is, "You're not going to really build it"—we will be building Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

As a matter of fact, there are actually already two of the early works projects going on to prepare for the major construction, and the RFQ, the request for qualifications, for the main project is set for 2013.

I must reiterate: Much of the information is already online, but we'll ensure that as more detailed information becomes available, it's provided to you.

In defence of the minister, you accused her of not understanding the question. Quite frankly, I don't think you understood the answer, which is, depending on how construction is going to be carried out, the costings, the timelines and a lot of those financial details are part of the competitive process. You can't have it both ways. You can't make a big fuss if you say something has been sole-sourced and not competitively bid on and then turn around and say, "But we want you to announce all of the information in advance that would actually be part of a competitive bid." As in many cases, you can't have it both ways.

The other thing I would point out is that in fact the detailed plans are the responsibility of the hospital. Yes, they need to go to the Ministry of Health for approval, but the development of the detailed plans is actually presented by the hospital that's doing the particular project. Some of the information is under development at the hospital and, when it has been approved by the Ministry of Health, can be made available. But a lot of the information you're asking for—and this would apply to all of the projects—will become available as part of the ongoing construction process. Are we willing to make it publicly available as it becomes available? Absolutely; we will provide it.

I just want to point out that we are very proud of our record. In fact, it was your government that kept promising things and then not actually putting them in

the budget. If you look at what we did in our first two mandates, we had a capital plan for hospital reconstruction, and we carried that out. Now we have announced another round, a 10-year plan for hospital construction. We have announced what those projects will be and we will carry them out. If you look at our eight-year record of building hospitals, I'm absolutely delighted to stand it up against your eight-year record of building hospitals. We're the people who built hospitals in our last eight years; you're the people who closed hospitals in your last eight years.

So yes, we will build Cambridge Memorial, we will build a new hospital in Milton, we will be building Groves Memorial, Speaker, we will be building Brock-

ville General and we will be building Renfrew Victoria Hospital. I'm very proud that we are going to do that, because we're the party that has actually taken the time to develop long-term capital plans—not just in health care but in all sorts of other sectors—and then actually has followed through on our capital plans. We look forward—with your co-operation, I hope—to continuing to do that. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1809.*



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Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
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Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	
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Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity—Spadina	
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<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
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Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
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Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	





*Continued from back cover*

### **Collingwood General and Marine Hospital**

Mr. Jim Wilson ..... 169

### **Government policies**

Mr. Jonah Schein..... 170

### **David Evans**

Ms. Dipika Damerla..... 170

### **Food and beverage processing industry**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman..... 170

### **Food and beverage processing industry**

Mrs. Laura Albanese ..... 171

### **Jean Casselman Wadds**

Mr. Steve Clark ..... 171

### **Annual report, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)..... 171

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

### **Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act, 2011, Bill 11, Mr. Duguid / Loi de 2011 visant à attirer les investissements et à créer des emplois, projet de loi 11, M. Duguid**

First reading agreed to..... 171

### **Helping Volunteers Give Back Act, 2011, Bill 12,**

**Ms. Jones / Loi de 2011 visant à aider les bénévoles  
à contribuer, projet de loi 12, Mme Jones**

First reading agreed to..... 172

Ms. Sylvia Jones ..... 172

## **STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

### **Economic development**

Hon. Brad Duguid ..... 172

Mr. Monte McNaughton ..... 172

Mr. Rosario Marchese..... 173

## **PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

### **Aggregate extraction**

Mr. Jim Wilson ..... 174

### **Health care funding**

Mr. Jim Wilson ..... 174

### **Rail service**

Mr. Victor Fedeli..... 174

### **Wind turbines**

Mr. John Yakabuski ..... 175

### **Wind turbines**

Mr. Toby Barrett ..... 175

### **Multiple sclerosis treatment**

Mr. Steve Clark ..... 175

### **Wind turbines**

Mr. Todd Smith..... 175

### **Long-term care**

Ms. Sylvia Jones..... 176

### **Lyme disease**

Mr. Steve Clark ..... 176

### **Aggregate extraction**

Ms. Lisa MacLeod ..... 176

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

### **Throne speech debate / Débat sur le discours du trône**

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza..... 177

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti..... 178

Mr. John O'Toole..... 179

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong ..... 180

Ms. Soo Wong..... 180

Mr. Steve Clark ..... 180

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza..... 181

Mr. John Yakabuski ..... 181

Mr. John Vanthof ..... 184

Mr. Phil McNeely..... 184

Mr. Victor Fedeli..... 184

Mr. Taras Natyshak ..... 184

Mr. John Yakabuski ..... 185

Mr. Taras Natyshak ..... 185

Miss Monique Taylor..... 187

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti..... 188

Ms. Laurie Scott..... 188

Mr. Paul Miller..... 188

Mr. Phil McNeely..... 189

Mr. Taras Natyshak ..... 189

Hon. Glen R. Murray..... 190

Mr. Yasir Naqvi ..... 191

Mr. John Yakabuski ..... 193

Miss Monique Taylor..... 193

Mr. Bill Mauro ..... 193

Mr. John O'Toole..... 194

Mr. Yasir Naqvi ..... 194

Hon. James J. Bradley..... 194

Debate deemed adjourned..... 195

**ADJOURNMENT DEBATE / DÉBAT SUR  
LA MOTION D'AJOURNEMENT**

**Hospitals**

Mr. Rob Leone.....	195
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	196



## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 29 November 2011 / Mardi 29 novembre 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan</b>	
Hon. John Milloy .....	151
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	151
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	156
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	157
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	157
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	157
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	158
Second reading debate adjourned.....	158

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong .....	158
Hon. Ted McMeekin.....	158
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	158
Hon. Michael Chan .....	158

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Apprenticeship training

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	158
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	159

#### Apprenticeship training

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	159
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	160

#### Taxation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	160
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	160

#### Manufacturing jobs

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	161
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	161
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	162

#### Apprenticeship training

Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	162
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	162

#### Environmental protection

Mr. Jonah Schein.....	163
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	163

#### Health care funding

Mr. Bob Delaney .....	163
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	163

#### Long-term care

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	164
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	164

#### Youth services

Miss Monique Taylor.....	164
Hon. Eric Hoskins .....	165

#### Rent regulation

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	165
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	165

#### Aggregate extraction

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	166
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	166

#### Mining industry

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	166
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	166

#### Tourism

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza.....	167
Hon. Michael Chan .....	167

#### Red tape reduction

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	167
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	167

#### Conservation

Mr. Paul Miller.....	168
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	168
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	168

#### Visitors

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	168
------------------------------------	-----

#### Use of question period

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	168
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	168

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	168
------------------------------	-----

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

#### Community colleges

Mr. Rob Leone .....	169
---------------------	-----

#### Road maintenance

Mr. Michael Mantha.....	169
-------------------------	-----

#### GO Transit

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	169
-----------------------	-----

*Continued on inside back cover*

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of Ontario**

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**Assemblée législative  
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Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

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**Wednesday 30 November 2011**

**Mercredi 30 novembre 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller





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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 30 November 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 30 novembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please let us pray.  
*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 29, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Good morning, Speaker. I will be sharing my time this morning with three fellow members: the member from York-Simcoe, the member from Durham and the member from Leeds-Grenville.

I'm interested in this particular bill because, as members here know, over the initial four years of my first term I spent a lot of time on two opposite ends of the age spectrum: one was young children and the other was seniors. We have a lot of those in all of our ridings, notably in mine, so when we can take some measure that assists one of these extremes, I am always up for it.

Our party, I would argue, has the best track record in the entire House for dealing with seniors. We constantly are bringing forth, whether it be private members' bills or our support for other legislation—we do work in order to support our seniors. I myself have introduced several times a property tax deferral bill for low-income seniors; it's a bill that the Liberal government voted down twice, including, for the first and last time in history, voting down a bill where one of their own members was co-sponsor. I found that rather interesting, especially in light of the fact that that bill was reintroduced by way of an election promise by that Liberal government in September during the election campaign. Who says they can't learn, Speaker? But I digress.

It is because of our party's support for seniors that I stand here today and speak to this bill. We have in Ontario a jobs crisis. That's right, we have a jobs crisis.

You've heard those words; listen well, because we have one and it's in the private sector. This means Ontarians across this entire province are in the depths of an income crisis as well.

Many of these Ontarians are taking care of aging parents and taking care of aging grandparents. Especially in these tough economic times, it is the job of government to create the right conditions for businesses to thrive so that they can, in turn, create good-paying jobs for Ontarians and so that Ontarians can indeed take care of their families. Accountability and fiscal responsibility on the part of the government are crucial to achieving that objective.

So at a time like this, when we are literally standing on the brink of an economic disaster in the province of Ontario—and no, Speaker, I'm not overstating—every single move counts. At all times the government must make the decisions that will deliver the biggest bang for the taxpayers' buck. It's incumbent on the government to do this.

The question for us, Speaker, is this: Is the McGuinty government doing what it should to help Ontarians get the good-paying jobs they need so that they can help their families? The facts, I am afraid, suggest that this is not the case.

Ontario lost 75,000 full-time private sector jobs in October alone. In question period yesterday, the Premier stood up and said proudly that Ontario had regained 276,000 jobs since the recession, which occurred, as we know, in 2008-09. That's a gross number; it's not a net number. And we have to start thinking in net terms, because if we're creating jobs but losing more, we're basically not even running in place.

This is the 58th straight month in which our province, once Canada's economic engine, has had a jobless rate higher than the national average. This means that in far too many cases, Ontarians who are supporting their aging parents or supplementing their parents' or their grandparents' retirement incomes may well be out of a job. At a time like this, a responsible government would be considering measures that would target our jobs crisis; proposing for consideration by this House bills that are innovative, that are thought out, that are meaningful.

Enter the McGuinty government on a white horse with the healthy homes renovation tax credit. But on closer examination, that horse is stumbling, the armour is tin and the knight on the horse is tilting at windmills again. If the aim of this bill is to help seniors, it fails miserably. If the aim of this bill is to help Ontarians with disabilities, it fails immeasurably. If the aim of this bill is to



stimulate Ontario's economy, it fails completely. The only thing that hits the mark with this bill is the title—it does have a nice ring to it—“healthy homes.”

Let's talk about how it fails our seniors. Let's consider how much of an impact Bill 2 could have on Ontario families and seniors. About 13% of Ontario's population—about 1.8 million people—are over 65 years of age and meet the age requirement of Bill 2. The median income for seniors in Ontario—meaning that the largest number of seniors fall into this income category—is \$25,000 a year for a single, \$45,000 for a couple. To be eligible for the \$1,500 maximum-end tax credit under Bill 2, a senior has to spend \$10,000 on certain home renovations. We're talking about things, according to the bill, that are attached to mobility, functionality and accessibility, not covered by any other program and not meant in any way to enhance the value of the property.

At that income level, in the best-case scenario, we're talking about nearly half of the annual income of most seniors living in this province. That is the spending limit. So you're writing off a number of people—a huge number of people—right away. While some seniors in Ontario may be in the position to put \$10,000 into necessary renovations—which, let's face it, is a very substantial sum—the reality is that far too many can't.

The other caveats we've heard: This bill peels that onion away and away, and it gets down pretty far; I would say right down to the core of the onion or indeed to the seed. So I've got to ask, Speaker, how cynical is that? Are you really out to help seniors? Because the slice of the seniors' pie that you're actually helping is minuscule, especially with savings having taken a very serious hit over the past couple of years and diminishing the nest egg that provides for seniors' cash flow. This is what you are doing.

We have already established that there is a jobs crisis in Ontario. Seniors who are living off their savings or are dependent on their families for income are unlikely to be able to take advantage of this tax credit, and too many of our families at this point cannot assist because, as we know, Speaker, we're dealing with a situation where, as I've mentioned, our unemployment level is the highest in the country; for the past 58 months, it's over 8%. We're running a risk of seeing that expand, because of the softness of the economy.

0910

Furthermore, on this bill, even if you are a senior on low income and you've managed to save enough money to renovate your home to increase its value, so that you can build equity and secure an income for the future, well, you're not eligible, because that's not what this tax credit is about. And if you are a senior with a disability and require this help, you can only benefit from this tax credit if you're not already receiving any other assistance. So if you're on ODSP or have assistive devices that are paid for by the province—any of those things—they negate at least some, if not all, of what you can claim under this bill.

So the question is begged: Who does this bill actually help? The answer is the Liberals, because it sounds a

heck of a lot better than it actually is, and it benefits that small percentage of seniors who are in a stable, financial situation and who probably would have proceeded with the needed renovation whether there was a tax credit or not.

The rules of the game on this bill say that you must have attained at least 65 years by the end of 2012. I feel a personal relationship with this bill, because I will have attained that age by the end of 2012.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you very much for that round of applause.

What that means is that if I want to do a \$10,000 renovation to my home, I get to put \$1,500 in my pocket, and yes, Speaker, I can afford it. So I might do it. But the truth is I don't need it. If I do it, it will be something that will enhance my mobility, given that, God forbid, I need it, or I'll do it to enhance the value of my home and I'll put 1,500 free dollars in my pocket. That's who's going to benefit, and that's not what the intention should have been.

You have the option to help so many people in this province. You have that option. You could do it by broad-based tax relief. If you want to help seniors only, there are so many ways to do it. You could increase long-term-care beds; you could certainly help in the home by increasing your allocation to home care. But no, you do basically a political dance and you dangle a carrot that most people cannot have. That's what this bill is, and let there be no error about that.

Like many of the McGuinty government policies we've had to endure over the years—the ban on pesticides springs to mind; it's one of my favourites—this bill has a title that overcommits, while the content underdelivers. That bill guaranteed a ban on pesticides in the province of Ontario—100%. But if you look at the exemptions and find out what was actually banned, they banned 1.5% of the use of pesticides—that was the 2,4-D you put on your front lawn. The rest of it, all the rural people and the golf courses and the railway rights of way—so the 100% ban was a 98.5% ban.

My point is this: Whatever you do by way of legislation, you say one thing with the title and you do something else with regulation. Your intent, almost invariably, is political. Sure, it's a great thing to get a \$1,500 tax credit, and many Ontarians can certainly use \$1,500. Unfortunately, those who need it the most are in practice rendered ineligible.

In short, this bill sets out to benefit those, like myself, who don't need it. So this bill actually fails the broad-based category called seniors: people who are in need, people who cannot have through this bill.

How does this bill fail families? It does that too. If the goal is to offer financially strapped families some relief, then how about taking action to tackle the actual problem at hand? I mentioned broad-based tax relief. The example that comes to mind immediately, because we dealt with it in this House based on an NDP private member's bill last week, is HST relief on heating, or you could do HST



relief on hydro. There are a lot of things that you could do.

When it comes to economic stimulus, putting 8% of the cost of home heating or the cost of hydro back in the pocket of every single Ontarian and having those people spend that money to stimulate the economy—that's great. And by the way, that applies to seniors as well, and it applies to the families who take care of seniors. So why not deal with that?

An HST break on hydro bills to leave families some additional income in their collective pocket so that they could make decisions on what they need to spend their money on, or spending responsibly with respect for taxpayers' money so that Ontarians are not overburdened with taxes and fees and premiums that take away from their families. That's the hallmark of this government.

While we're on the topic of spending responsibly, I mentioned earlier that Ontario is in the midst of a jobs crisis and Ontarians are facing an income crisis. My friends over there know full well that the depth of the economic problems that Ontario currently has is extremely significant. Everybody knows we're in trouble. I'm afraid, Speaker, that people don't know just how much trouble we're in.

When you've got a province that owes over \$250 billion and with the projected deficits—forget about promises made, promises broken; I don't see us getting to a balanced budget before we get to a collective debt of about \$300 billion—one begins to wonder when it is that the ability to borrow on the part of this province becomes compromised. I don't think I overstate the case to say that this is the precise scenario that we saw in California; worse in Italy, in Greece. We see bond rating agencies downgrading even France at this point. Where does Ontario stack up in this? We have a problem.

Do you know who's not facing an income crisis, Speaker? The McGuinty government—no income crisis there. In 2011-12, the McGuinty government took in a record revenue of \$108.3 billion. I point that out because when we're dispensing money in one program or another and we're listening to fall economic statements, we've got to get the definition and terms correct.

The finance minister said that one of the problems that created the \$16-billion deficit projected for the current fiscal year is that revenue fell short by \$750 million. It fell short of his projections, but his projections haven't been right since he's been finance minister. What it didn't do is, it didn't fall short of the prior year. We actually collected record revenues in the province of Ontario—about \$1.6 billion or \$1.7 billion more in the current year than we did the prior year. So when you talk about revenue falling short, let's remember that. And that's revenue that comes out of the pockets of individual Ontarians and Ontario corporations. Still, they put our province into a \$16-billion deficit.

Since donning the mantle of finance minister, Dwight Duncan increased spending by \$21 billion per annum and has never balanced a single budget. The reason that the McGuinty government was able to get away with spend-

ing that much is because the province can still borrow, and that's how the current finance minister has increased Ontario's debt by \$70 billion. Yet that is still not the most frightening aspect of the Liberal spending spree of the past eight years. The McGuinty government has managed to increase its spending by also moving money from the reserve fund to cover their expenses, and we illustrated that in question period last week.

The Auditor General's review of the 2011 pre-election report on Ontario's finances stated that the purpose of the reserve "is to offset the impact of unexpected and adverse future events of the magnitude of, for example, a SARS outbreak ... in 2003 or a global recession" like the one in 2008. It should never be used to cover year-over-year expenditures or to reduce a deficit. This irresponsible use of the reserve fund is not in the best interests of Ontario, and certainly it's not in the best interests of Ontario seniors.

Events like SARS, as we know, tend to have a significant impact on the senior population. Ontario's Auditor General, in the review of the 2011 pre-election report on Ontario's finances, states that Ontario's population of seniors is projected to grow to 14.1% this year and 16% in 2016. Statistics also indicate that health care spending per person rises significantly after age 65.

Despite this and the expected rise in the senior population, the government somehow believes that the impact of aging on health care costs will be negligible over the next three years. By the way, that's also coming from the AG's report. If that is not a bad excuse for horrific planning, I'm not sure what is. Like always, the McGuinty government has cold facts staring it in the face, but chooses to look the other way and daydream and defer. That's what they've done for eight years, and that's what they're still doing.

0920

I find that, Speaker, more than passing strange because we're not in the Parliament that we left back in June. It's a new day, and we saw that last Thursday when this government began to lose votes. I would say that that heralds a point in time where they're going to lose a significant vote. I'm not rattling a sabre; the point is that you've got to come to the table and realize that you do not run the place single-handedly, that there are exigencies and problems that have to be addressed and that there are people who represent a majority of the citizenry of the province of Ontario sitting on this side of the House who, if the Liberals are absent without leave, will take their place. We're ready to do that.

According to the AG, our health care costs will rise significantly as a result of an increasingly aging population. How does this government plan on taking care of Ontario's seniors when it is wasting money on ineffective programs? Some \$60 million here, a billion dollars there, an eHealth scandal or two, and it all adds up to literally—literally—billions in debt, billions in deficits and a very vulnerable senior population that cannot count on the services that they have worked hard for in the province that they built.



That is something that I keep top of mind when I deal with seniors, as I do with some frequency. These are the folks who built what we have. These are the folks who invented that rule that said that you don't spend more than what you have. These are the folks who understand that there's a column marked "needs" and a column marked "wants," and you don't go and stray into the column marked "wants" unless you have an extra amount of money put aside for the rainy day or, at least, the day where you can go and delve into wants, take that vacation or whatever it happens to be.

On this side of the House, we say that if the McGuinty government really wants to do something for seniors, they should rein in their spending, show some respect for the taxpayer and manage the province's finances responsibly—responsibly. That way, seniors will receive the health care and the medication that they need, the services that they require and, yes, the reward that they deserve. This means that the McGuinty government could have done a lot more for seniors than offer token policies that miss the mark.

In fact, Speaker, I would say to you that what we have in the first two weeks of this 40th Parliament, by way of the presentation or at least the announcement of impending legislation or bills that affect Ontario, are bills that I consider to be entirely cynical. They're all politically motivated: "Oh, we think we have a problem in south-western Ontario; we'll go and fix that fund." "We have a problem with seniors; we'll go and address something to them." But there isn't really any help. It's kind of a shell game. The McGuinty government could have done so much more for seniors than offer these token policies.

There were warning signs, you know, all along the way, as Ontario was slipping, slipping into an economic downturn, losing jobs long before there was any global crisis. We were out there raising the warning flag; nobody was listening. It was going to be happy times forever—but it wasn't, was it? The McGuinty government was not listening then. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like they have learned any lesson and they're not listening now.

The fall economic statement confirmed that Ontario's debt is soaring, literally soaring. I cannot believe what I saw here in this House last week. I ran companies for most of my life, and I know what the bottom line is supposed to look like. There is no bottom line in governing a province, but there is an ability and a need to bring in a bottom line that is zero. In other words, you create a budget, you take in the money you predict, you spend that money and you wind up with zero. You don't wind up in debt; you don't wind up in deficit.

But what I saw here last week was a standing ovation for a finance minister who announced that he was delivering a \$16-billion deficit. That was up \$2 billion over a \$14-billion deficit last year—"But don't worry, Speaker, we're going to balance the budget by 2017-18," he said.

Where I come from, all you have to do is sit down at your computer and open up Excel and put in the points

for each year. The way I see it, those lines are spreading. Our deficits are rising. Our ability to balance a budget by 2017-18—well, it's well beyond the next election, so why should they worry?

That's what I saw last week, and yet here we are with programs that suggest that what we're going to do is take money that wasn't spent in other programs, shift them, and we'll be able to afford these new programs. The fact of the matter is that's spending—you can call it anything you want, but that's spending in excess of what we had, and the point is that the deficit next year—mark my words, because we'll be here discussing it next year—will be in excess of what they're talking about and moving quite the opposite from the line that goes towards a balanced budget.

How the Premier and the finance minister—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Excuse me. There's two sidebars down there by the third party. I'd appreciate it if we could keep it down to a dull roar.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you, Speaker. How the Premier and the finance minister of Canada's largest province are always the last ones to know is beyond my ability to explain, as is their stubborn refusal to consider managing government salaries.

Let's put everyone on a fair playing field, Speaker. Why should Ontarians be getting a deal far worse than government employees? Why should Ontario families, who are the ones responsible for their elderly parents and grandparents, or those parents and grandparents themselves, foot the bill through taxes for people who don't want to step up and take one for the team? Ontario families had to take shorter shifts at work, had to pay higher fees for services—the health tax being one—and had to take pay cuts. Some non-unionized employees had their wages frozen for a few years. According to some reports—the Canadian Federation of Independent Business comes to mind—even before we consider benefits and pension plans, government salaries are 13% higher than wages for comparable jobs in the private sector. So when we talk about wage freezes, because we need more money capable of addressing the deficits that preclude these kinds of programs, we're not just whistling in the wind.

Statistics Canada shows that there were over 92,000 people working for the government of Ontario. That's the public sector, not the broader public sector, so it excludes arm's-length agencies, boards, commissions, what have you. Their combined salary, according to Stats Canada, was over \$6.5 billion in 2010. Health and social service institution workers' salaries reached over \$13.5 billion. Add post-secondary and trade institution salaries—another approximately \$7.6 billion; local school boards, over \$14.8 billion. I might call attention to that, because that's actually higher than what we paid health and social services—educating our kids; government enterprises, nearly \$3.2 billion. That's where the money goes.

Adding all that up, taxpayers are carrying at least \$45.6 billion in government salaries. The Auditor Gen-



eral has outlined that collective agreements the government has negotiated in the past eight years with the two main ministries included pay increases that, in most cases, exceeded the rate of inflation. How many Ontarians out there had that same experience? The answer, Speaker, is pretty clear: None. So this may sound like I'm straying a little bit from the point at hand, but the point at hand is our ability to afford what it is we want to do.

We are the first to stand up for seniors, but we're the last who are going to support a bill like that, because all that is, is increased spending for a very tiny tranche, or slice, of the population that basically would much prefer broad-based tax relief.

If that's not enough—the spending, I mean—the Auditor General continues on to say that this was also the case with past negotiated wage settlements across the broader public sector. So this is how Ontarians are paying government workers right now, and we are all on the hook to pay for wage increases if the McGuinty government doesn't find the backbone to do with government workers what Ontarians who don't have cushy government jobs had to do, which is tighten their belts. With salary expenditures of such magnitude, it is simply insulting and irresponsible for the McGuinty government to dismiss doing anything about government worker wages.

And then, to add insult to injury, they introduce the healthy homes renovation tax credit, a bill that pretends to solve seniors' income problems, while in reality it does absolutely nothing to help those Ontarians who are in most need.

0930

I cannot reiterate strongly enough the fact that this is a vulnerable segment of the population. It is a cynical approach to dealing with that vulnerable section of the population to suggest that you're going to create a bevy of healthy homes by giving seniors across the board something when, in fact, you're giving a very tiny number of seniors something or you're giving seniors who don't need it something.

Broad-based tax relief, I say; and broad-based tax relief is what my party is prepared to support. That's why we voted with the NDP last week.

I began my remarks by stating that our party is proud of our track record of supporting seniors. I will end my remarks by saying that the province that Ontario seniors left us was an immeasurable gift, and we must never forget that and we must never forsake it. Ontario has a proud tradition of entrepreneurial spirit, a proud tradition of diversity.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Excuse me, the sidebar at the end, that's the second time I've asked you to keep it down. Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** This is a province of great potential. If you listen to the McGuinty government, you hear that their initiatives are making this province ever better, but these claims are quickly negated by the facts. What the McGuinty government does not want anyone to

know is that while they are coming up with catchy bill titles, the content of these policies is making Ontario worse. What is truly distasteful is that this time they are doing so by invoking the words "Ontario's seniors," as if they were the sole guardians of that group.

If you want to invest in Ontario seniors, invest in home care. We all know it's desperately needed. Put in more long-term-care beds. An aging population needs that kind of investment. Offer broad-based tax relief, like an HST cut on essential services for everyone. The healthy homes renovation tax credit is not the way to repay our seniors for their years of hard work in building our province, and it is not the way to build a better future for their grandchildren.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to join the debate on Bill 2, the proposed home renovation tax credit for seniors.

While it appears obvious at the beginning and the goal of making it more affordable for seniors to make home improvements to help them stay in their homes may be commendable, this credit will not help seniors on fixed incomes who need the tax credit most.

To access the full \$1,500 tax credit, Dalton McGuinty's so-called relief requires seniors to spend \$10,000. I certainly don't know many seniors with \$10,000 to spare. Ontario seniors most in need would have benefited more from a reduction in the HST on their home heating or their hydro bills. Certainly in my constituency office, the question of the increase and the additional HST burden on these necessities was one of the things that I heard most about for several months, last winter particularly.

Seniors are struggling to pay bills on a fixed income, and they cannot afford to put up thousands of dollars to be eligible for a home renovation credit. I think it's important to note that once again the McGuinty government has chosen, frankly, a sound bite over real help for seniors. Ontario seniors deserve better.

The government's press release announcing the credit claims, "The credit would make it more affordable for seniors to install lifts and make other improvements to help them stay in their homes more safely and comfortably." As I said a moment ago, it's a worthy goal but one that is being defeated by this government's failure to address its failings in the home care field.

The speech from the throne directly connected the proposed tax credit and the issue of home care: "In combination with this new tax credit, your government will move to increase home care services for seniors." Now, I think a lot of us would like to know what the government means by the word "increase" when it makes this promise.

The auditor spoke about the funding of home care in his Review of the 2011 Pre-Election Report on Ontario's Finances. He said, "Long-term-care home costs have increased an average of 8.6% per year over the past eight years. Over the 2011-12 [to] 2013-14 period, the government plans to hold growth in expenditures to an average



of 4.2% per year, or about half of the past growth rate. The growth in CCAC expenditures has averaged 7.2% per year over the past eight years. The government's forecast for the 2011-12 [to] 2013-14 period assumes that growth in CCAC expenditures will average 2.3% per year, or only about one third of the past growth rate."

Now, the obvious question to ask is, if the government is going to increase home care services, what number are they starting with? The increased need for funding is driven by the increased demand for home care. Yet, the government is cutting the rate of increase from an average of 7% down to 2%.

Would the government have us believe that the demand has fallen? If the government does not increase funding enough to meet the demand, then it will mean more and more seniors and others in need on waiting lists for home care. And if they do not meet the long-term-care demand, they will face an ever-increasing demand for home care as people sit on waiting lists for long-term care.

It is doubtful that the government will be able to meet its targets to reduce the increases in long-term-care funding and home care funding. The Auditor General's 2011 review stated, "We concluded that the government's assumption that both programs will be able to significantly reduce their annual expenditure growth rates is optimistic rather than cautious."

So it appears that funding will go up, probably more than the government predicts, and I suppose the government will try to claim that this means that services will go up. This is an assumption, obviously, that many people will be pinning their hopes on.

The best measure of this is not funding in dollars; it's how much help each individual who is assisted needs and, more importantly, how much he or she gets. I think it's very important to look at the fact that in the 2010 annual report of the Auditor General he points out the problems with people receiving the services they need. The first one: "Funding is still not being allocated primarily on the basis of locally assessed client needs but rather remains a historically based allocation. This can result in clients with similar home care needs not receiving similar levels of services." The second problem he points out is that "CCACs do not have adequate assurance that services are being acquired from their external providers in the most cost-effective manner."

The unequal provision of health and social services throughout Ontario is an issue that I have raised a number of times in this House and that this government has done little to deal with. My fast-growing constituency has always received a lower level of funding for services than slower-growing areas, and many constituencies, particularly in the 905 belt, are in the same boat.

0940

When you look at these two issues, then—and, as I say, in the throne speech, they tie them together as the home renovation credit sound bite on the one hand and improved, increased funding for home care. But an examination of both these initiatives demonstrates the level

of superficiality in terms of what seniors might be able to expect.

As we point out, the criteria are to be 65 or over and to be a permanent resident of Ontario, and that's it. There's a list of things that are eligible for funding, and obviously they may or may not be able to be afforded by those people who need them most.

When you look at the numbers for long-term care and home care, they are not based on the increased need. We know that the senior population is increasing; we know that health care funding is more important at the senior level, and this is not being addressed at all. To suggest that, by the numbers, you're going to cut the increases in half when the increases in the last eight years have not been matched to growing numbers and growing needs—this is a pretty chilling picture that the government is facing.

We also know that they have refused to look at more generalized approaches to providing relief. Certainly, as I mentioned, the most common cause of telephoning my office throughout the six months in the November-to-March period of time was on the HST being added to those essentials of home heat and hydro. The fact that this government is totally unwilling to provide that kind of support for people is really quite disingenuous when you look at this—as I refer to it—sound bite that sounds like it will do something for seniors.

When we look at the kind of funding mechanisms that home care and long-term care are going to be faced with, this is a very bleak picture in reality. So it seems to me that these two parts, as they were put together in the throne speech, need to be seen together. They do not look like a picture where we are going to be able to stand up and say that we have provided for the most vulnerable in our community.

The question of real relief isn't there. The question of providing for a very small part of the senior population through this healthy home tax credit must be seen for what it is, and that is, a very superficial response to a very serious and growing need: looking after seniors in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I was very impressed by our member from Thornhill, our finance critic, and his very thorough and well-researched response to a very targeted bill, Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit.

I think it's important to start at the beginning, and then I'll frame it out, with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker. In the preamble of the bill, it does outline very carefully how it's targeted, and it says, "The tax credit for a taxation year is generally determined with reference to qualifying expenditures"—in other words, it's by regulation what you can actually spend the money on—"paid by or on behalf of" someone else after September 30 and before January 1, 2013. So there's about a year there.

Then there's section 103.1.1, which lists the eligibility: "An eligible individual's tax credit for a taxation



year is 15 per cent of the lesser of \$10,000 and the amount by which the individual's qualifying expenditures"—so it's really about 15%. It's actually \$1,500, spending the maximum.

Let's look at how they get that money and how they spend the money. It's very important. If they have to cash a GIC, they may have to pay tax on it to get it out. To do that, for instance, if you want to get your hands on \$10,000, you've got to cash in \$20,000, because you're probably going to pay tax in the range of 50%. So they're reducing their capital asset in a time—there's no income security on that, either. They may be taking it out of a plan that's paying a reasonable rate of return, and in today's climate, you're lucky to get between 1% and 1.5% on a GIC.

This is the cynical part of this. The member from Thornhill touched on it, and I'm going to wrap this back to the real underlying problems here. We found out last Friday that Bill 4, the NDP's bill on giving everyone the provincial portion of the HST back—let's say it's \$100 a year. Those seniors or other persons who would qualify for that reduction of 8% would be spending that money probably on food and/or other kinds of—feeling comfortable in life a bit. It would have gone directly into the economy, because anybody making under \$30,000 spends all of it—not some, all of it. The very rich who make \$300,000 probably only spend a third of their money. They're putting the rest in some kind of investment, deferred income, a trust, whatever.

But this thing here, when they spend \$10,000, how they get it is important. When they spend the \$10,000, there's 8% HST on that. So they're taking right off the top of that expenditure half of the money. Do you understand? They're going to be—so they're really not getting back \$1,500. Because of the HST, which is 8% more on everything, they're actually only getting back about \$200. That's how cynical this really is.

Yet they refused. The majority of the people of Ontario voted for the NDP and the Conservatives; the opposition now has the majority. That means 50%-plus of the people of Ontario voted for the opposition side of the House. We voted unanimously in support of giving everyone a fair break. And I felt the member from northern Ontario spoke passionately about how you have to turn your oil furnace on—we don't have natural gas as much in some of the northern communities—probably in October, and it probably goes until April.

I'm going to put something on the floor up here for the Premier or the Minister of Finance to listen to. Why didn't they compromise? Why didn't they say, "Okay, we'll give you the HST off during the winter months"? They kept saying it was going to cost \$300 million to give this credit back; that's absolutely assumed revenue, that people are going to be spending that much on home heating. They could have easily compromised that day and been victorious and said, "Look, we'll take it off from November till March." All the people in northern Ontario who must heat their home would have received relief—everyone. I think it would have been a fair thing

to do and a reasonable thing to do, extending the olive branch to the opposition and giving credit to the NDP for trying to work with the government. But what have they done? They've put another shell on the table here that's empty. Once you open the nut, you find out it's empty.

Also the member from Thornhill mentioned, if you looked at the throne speech last week, it was absolutely a disappointment, to put it mildly. I only have a couple of minutes left. This is a plan for jobs and the economy. Everybody knows that Ontario is in serious trouble, and it's not me that is saying it. It's the experts who are saying it.

I'm going to give you three or four references here. There is a report out here; it's Prospects for Ontario's Prosperity. This is from Roger Martin; it's the prosperity institute. I'm going to give you a few references. These are not political statements; these are statements by experts who aren't bound to political outcomes. He says here, "We offer a set of recommendations for an overall prosperity agenda for 2020." There's so limited time here. He says, "Ontario's manufacturers shed 300,000 jobs. While the hemorrhaging has stopped, there is no evidence that these jobs will be coming back...." There are 300,000 jobs gone. What's their plan? There isn't a plan.

**0950**

The report goes on, and it states here that we are probably heading towards a double-dip recession. What's the plan? They're increasing spending. That spending is going to be the taxation of the future for these young people.

If you look at the Auditor General's report, which the member mentioned several times—I have a copy of it here, and I'd encourage everyone in Ontario to get a hold of it. What it's telling us in this report—I'm going to give you some idea. This is done by the Auditor General, whose report will be filed on Monday. Here's where we are: Health from 2003 to 2011 has spent, on average, 7.1% more each and every year. This is the Auditor General; it's on page 18. The projected forecast by Premier McGuinty is 3.6%, so they're cutting health care funding by 50%.

What is this home renovation tax credit all about? They haven't built any long-term-care beds—none. What is the growing population—it's aging. What's most needed is care for seniors. There's nothing in this home renovation; that's all baloney.

They have a program in the Ministry of Health called the Aging at Home strategy. I can tell you, from my riding of Durham, it's referred to as aging alone. There's nobody coming to help you with your personal care needs. CCACs are on their knees. I can't believe for a moment that they have no real plan to deal with the aging population. It's a tsunami of silver people; this is what it's called by the health care community.

Education spending from 2003 to 2011 was an average of 4.8% a year. The auditor says it's going to be 3%. Post-secondary training: They've been spending 8.6%; it's going down to 2.4%. Justice is 5.8%; it's going down to—they're taking 1.6% away from them. The court



systems are already backed up. They're taking spending from growing at 6.9% to 1.8%.

Now, I'm going to say what Don Drummond has said, and this is going to take the last part. Don Drummond is the person doing the full, respectful analysis. Here's what he said about your plan—you are a dismal, distant—you're 15th out of 16 jurisdictions in North America. You're 15th; you're almost last.

Here's what he said, and I'm going to end here, because I have to share my time. This is Don Drummond speaking, and it's an interview piece. He says, "Even to achieve the deficits I'm talking about," there's slight tightening of growth in spending that has to occur. He said it in an interview. "It's a lot higher than people are thinking," and it's generally illustrated. He says Ontario has a structural deficit. That's Don Drummond. It's not Tim Hudak.

We've been saying the fix is to freeze the payroll, which is the largest single expenditure in the ministry. It's the right thing to do. Nobody loses their job, to any great extent. His plan is to lay off 7% of the workforce of Ontario. That's going to cut services, and it's going to take three years to implement because everyone will have to get a severance cheque to leave.

Then it's completely—there is no consistent plan that is respected by any business leader or any other leader in public policy. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the bill that's entitled the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act. There's a long list of reasons—and I want to thank the member for Thornhill, the member for York–Simcoe and also the member for Durham for putting some of those reasons out in front.

It's typical of this government that they haven't told us too much about how they're going to pay for this or how much it's ultimately going to cost. It's simple: It really shows their philosophy. It shows that when they're in a \$16-billion hole, they decide the reason should be to keep on digging, and that's just not right.

The bill is so flawed, it goes right to the heart. I think it was the member for Thornhill who first talked about it, the reference to a healthy home. I've had the opportunity over the past 18 months to knock on doors in my riding not once but twice: during my by-election and also my election. I have to tell you that there are many homes in my riding that are far from healthy. After eight years of Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, particularly for those seniors, they're faced with higher taxes, skyrocketing energy bills; the cost of living is going through the roof.

So I guess the fundamental question, Speaker, that we need to put forward to ourselves today is, how do we make those homes and the people who live in them healthy? Well, I can tell you one thing: You're not going to do it by passing this bill, because it doesn't get to the heart of the problem.

The government made it very clear by this bill that they don't fully grasp how desperate people out there are.

They proved it last week when they first introduced this bill and then voted against a bill that would remove the HST from home heating. To make matters worse, we had the finance minister acknowledge that even though the majority of MPPs voted in favour of that private member's bill, the government wouldn't bring it back for third reading.

So let me make it clear to you over there, because you obviously don't get it: People are hurting, and they need a break. They're calling and they're writing our constituency offices, and I know they have to be contacting you; they had to be mentioning to you at the door that they're having difficulty making ends meet. This need for relief is especially true for our seniors living on fixed incomes.

They read in the newspaper about the bill that we passed on second reading to eliminate the HST from home heating, and they were excited. They think, "Finally Toronto, Queen's Park, is listening to what we've been saying." They've called me; they stopped me on the street all weekend and they said, "Thank you to the opposition for representing our views"; the fact that we could get together as two parties and put forward, in co-operation, a private member's bill. They felt proud, and they were shocked that a minority of members across, as the government, could stop that bill from coming to third reading.

I took a lot of time over the weekend to talk to folks about this tax credit program, and I used some of the examples—I was glad the member for Ottawa Centre used some examples about access to homes and bathrooms, shower amendments, widening doors. So I asked people, "Given the chance to choose, what would you choose? Do you have 10 grand in your jeans to spend on some of these renovations to get \$1,500 back, or would you prefer the HST relief?" Unanimously they all said the same thing. They supported what we were talking about.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** How are the people in Athens?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm glad you mentioned that. There were many people in Athens that I asked.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I've got to get back to Athens.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Well, you don't want to come back on this issue, I'll tell you that. They have no use for you on this issue.

Over the weekend, I also had a chance to speak to Linda Carr, who is a friend of mine. She's a very hard-working community activist, a member of Rideau Lakes council. She was the Leeds–Grenville representative at the 53rd annual convention for the United Senior Citizens of Ontario. They met for three days in August in North Bay.

During the convention, they debated and voted on 29 resolutions from all over the province—29 resolutions—on everything from doctor shortages to being gouged at the gas pump. They even had two resolutions dealing with hydro and home heating costs. Do you know what? It sounded a lot like the private member's bill that this side of the House voted in favour of. But do you know what wasn't in those 29 resolutions? There wasn't one



that even remotely mirrored your bill—not one. Again, it was pretty obvious from talking to seniors in my riding what choice they would make.

The Premier talked about not playing politics, making sure that—you know, he didn't want the opposition to divide. It's funny: He says one thing and does another. To my surprise on Friday, when I got back to my constituency, one of the members of the media handed me a press release that the member for Guelph distributed in my riding. It was entitled "Will Clark and Hillier follow Hudak's lead and vote against seniors?"

Who's trying to divide now? Who says one thing about working together and does something else?

1000

I actually brought this around and showed it to people and said, "You know, I'm a little worried you're going to think that Mr. Hillier and I are going to vote against seniors." They couldn't believe that this government would say one thing to the media, say one thing about working together, about listening to people, about moving things forward—moving forward; "Forward, together"—yet, when we get together on this side of the House, when we represent the majority of Ontarians when they want immediate relief, when they want relief on the HST, when they want relief to try not to pay \$10,000 for renovations—they're having difficulty paying a few hundred dollars on their hydro bill. I had hydro bills put in my face at the door and they asked: What are we going to do about it when we are elected? Well, I tell you, we told them that we were going to stand up for seniors, and we did last Thursday.

You think you're fighting for seniors. You know what? Joe Kapp and Angelo Mosca have more fight than you people across the way on seniors. I was more impressed with their battle than I am with your battle since we got here. You consistently say one thing and do another.

Madam Speaker, we had an opportunity last Thursday for the opposition to show the government, in a vote of 54 to 50, that we could do better, that we could move forward together, all parties, for things that our constituents wanted, for things that they told us they wanted at the door. I think it's important for us to listen to what they have to say. They don't have \$10,000. They don't have that type of money that they can provide for a healthy home tax credit. What is healthier is for their legislators to listen to them, to provide that relief on their home expenses, on those bills that they're struggling to pay for, that they have to choose, one over the other. We all have the need to provide our seniors with relief, but not with this bill, Speaker; not with this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments? The member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to comment on the four speakers. I listened to all of them quite intently: the member from Thornhill, the member from York–Simcoe, the member from Durham and the member from Leeds–Grenville. Each of them had something unique to say.

The member from Thornhill used the expression and the word "cynical" many times in talking about this particular government program. In his view, he thinks that what is happening here is a cynical exercise because the government has many options on how to spend \$150 million. In his view, this is a cynical exercise.

The member from York–Simcoe used a good expression. She said, Madam Speaker, that this was a sound bite over real help for seniors, and then did the tie-in with home care and how it is very difficult to understand how this government is going to proceed with only one aspect of their help for seniors, when you talk about the healthy homes renovation tax credit without also indicating what the home care is going to be.

The member from Durham gave a very good example about cashing in GICs to afford renovations. He used the word that this was all baloney because not many seniors are going to take it up.

The member from Leeds–Grenville talked about the choice that seniors are going to have to make and the choice that seniors would make. It reminded me a little bit of the unscientific Toronto Sun poll, when they polled their readers and asked them, "Which one, if you had a choice between taking the HST off home heating and the healthy homes renovation tax credit, would you choose?" The readers, by a 6-to-1 margin, chose taking the HST off of home heating—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** They don't have the same price tag. They don't cost the same.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** No, no, but I mean—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Questions and comments? The member for Oakville.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to join the debate this morning. Like other members, I listened intently to some of the remarks that were made. Certainly, I would think, at the end of the day, I didn't agree with most of the remarks.

I think on October 6, Ontarians also said that they didn't agree with most of the remarks that were made this morning. We're in the position that we're in the House now and we're moving forward. That was obviously an election that the Progressive Conservative Party was expecting to win but things happened along the way.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Fifteen points ahead in June.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Fifteen points ahead in June, and October 6, a much different result because people were able to look behind the curtain, were able to look at what the Conservatives were talking about. I think that came out very clear this morning when we heard some of the comments.

The healthy homes renovation tax credit is intended to help seniors stay in their homes longer. It's that simple. It helps family members who may decide to share a home with a senior; it helps them to perform that renovation. It also provides stimulus to the economy at a time when I think all three parties in the House would realize that the important thing that we need to be doing is that; something needs to be done about ensuring that people have



jobs. Something needs to be done about ensuring that people who would prefer to be in their own home are able to equip their own home in a way that allows them to stay there.

It's going to support about 10,500 jobs a year. Now, that may be a laughing matter to the opposition; it certainly isn't to the people who end up with the jobs. I think that would be some very welcome news.

It's going to support, we figure, about \$800 million in home renovation activity. That's something that I think is a major point of stimulus to the economy. That's something we've been after.

So the people spoke on October 6 and asked us to move ahead with this type of—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Although we would all agree with the goal of the bill—the goal, as stated, is to help seniors stay in their own homes. The four members who spoke before us understand that and agree, but it isn't the way to get there. We're talking a \$150-million program, and we're talking a direction that the government is taking that is going to help so few.

Like the four speakers who spoke before, we know that seniors have a hard time staying in their homes, but they have a hard time staying in their homes because they cannot afford to heat their homes. Taking the HST off home heating would help them. They have a hard time staying in their homes because they cannot afford the property taxes on their homes, but there's nothing in this bill that will help this.

Do seniors have a hard time staying in their homes? Yes, they do. Is it because of renovations? Some of them, some of the time, but we're talking a very tiny, little slice of the problem there. We're talking a decision to allocate \$150 million when the people of Ontario—60% of the people who voted—voted either for the NDP or for the PCs. That 60% of the people voted to take the HST off home heating, but are we going to respect the wishes of 60% of Ontarians? No, we're going to move ahead with a policy that is so tiny that it's not going to help a whole lot of people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** These incentives are only a small part of what our government has been doing for aging at home. There are many other pieces of the Aging at Home strategy, and this will help some seniors make that decision to ready their homes for when they have to.

I participated in the federal project when these same types of tax credits were available for other issues. Would I have replaced my furnace and my roof at that time? I probably might have waited a couple of years. But this gives us the incentive to do it.

These tax credits are targeted to specific items: walk-in tubs, lifts etc. Seniors will look at their alternatives and aging at home will be promoted by the bill.

Of course, not all seniors can afford to take advantage of the tax credits. There will be, however, an incentive to prepare our homes for infirmities we encounter as we age. Renovations are not made for one year; it's not \$10,000 for one year, it's \$10,000 over maybe 10 or 15 years that you'll be in your home, so it comes out to maybe \$1,000 a year. So more people will be able to participate in that, looking at it over the long term.

This will incent those improvements, will create economic activity and will assist in making this option available for more seniors. The ability to age in our own homes is very important as we—in my own case, as we get closer to this age, this is what we want to do. It'll advertise the fact that these improvements can be made. The dollars can be set aside, and to think that it has to come out of your pocket immediately is erroneous. Your home improvements are put in over several years.

This will be great incentive to getting more people aging at home, and that, in our society, is what the seniors want, and that's what we want for them.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Response? The member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It's a pleasure to debate with my colleagues from York Simcoe, Durham and Leeds–Grenville and put our party's points across, and as well, to listen to the responses of our friends from Beaches–East York, Oakville, Nickel Belt and Ottawa–Orléans.

You know, my friend from Durham brought up something very interesting, and it illustrates what I talked about when I mentioned a shell game. If you think about it—take a senior, 73 years old, who wants to take advantage of this and whose income is entirely derived from what is now a registered income fund. So that money comes out of there, and it's taxable when it's withdrawn. So there is tax paid to both the federal government and to Ontario on that money that's being used for the home renovation, and then the home renovation itself pays for goods and services that carry a 13% tax, the HST, 8% of which goes to the province of Ontario. So that's just moving money around and penalizing seniors for wanting to do this, number one.

Number two, to take a look at the \$1,000 home renovation that the member from Ottawa–Orléans talks about, where there would be a 15% rebate—\$150—take a look at that \$150 and ask yourself the question: In the broad-based tax relief that I spoke about, the HST being the example, that's approximately the amount that that same senior would be getting back every year—not just one year, every single year—if the 8% were taken off that.

The problem with you folks is you're choking on the Kool-Aid. You've got to stop looking at it as—my friend from Oakville talks about “the people have spoken on October 6.” Yes, they did speak. They wanted broad-based relief or they wouldn't have put more people on this side than they put over there. The sooner you people get this through your heads and start to understand what's

going on in this House, the sooner we can get on with business. We're not going to be here for four years, and you know it.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The time is close to 10:15, and I declare this House recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I'd like to acknowledge the presence of Chris Hodgson and the Ontario Mining Association, who are in and around the Legislature today for their Meet the Miners event. On behalf of the OMA, the Ontario Mining Association, I'd like to invite all members to make their way to the reception this evening at the Sutton Place. The Ontario Mining Association has invited all of us to meet them. They are very, very interesting people.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The Salvation Army is the largest non-governmental direct social service provider in Canada, providing critical aid to more than 1.5 million Canadians every year. Queen's Park is pleased to welcome representatives today as they host the Salvation Army parliamentary reception: Lieutenant Colonels Susan and Dirk Van Duinen, divisional leaders, Ontario central east division; Lieutenant Colonel Lee Graves, divisional leader, Great Lakes division; Major Pat Phinney; Majors John and Brenda Murray; and Lieutenant Colonel Ray Moulton. I encourage all members and their staff to attend today between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in committee room 2. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, member. Further introductions? Attorney General?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I wonder if you could help me welcome four very good friends of mine from the Kingston area that have joined us today. They are Dan Couture, Sam Laldin and Grace and Bill Eves. They're sitting right here in the gallery.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We welcome our guests.

Further introductions? There being none, it is now time for oral questions—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. I've got to learn to use my broader vision. Yes, member? Carry on.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Richmond Hill. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Richmond Hill.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Yes. It's my pleasure to welcome Lester Lui from Richmond Hill, visiting the House today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Congratulations. You're really coming along with remembering the names of all the ridings. For week two, it's really good.

I want to take this opportunity to wish the Minister of Children and Youth Services a belated happy birthday. It was his birthday yesterday, so if you can all give him a round of applause.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's not an introduction. I would have saved that for another moment at another time.

The member from Scarborough—Rouge River.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say, congratulations to you for being elected the Speaker of the House. I haven't had a chance to say this to you publicly.

I would like to recognize my Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who celebrated her birthday last week. I had the honour of serving under this minister in previous terms.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There is another time to do that. I appreciate the members' enthusiasm, but I would ask that you keep your introductions brief and that we can move on to oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is directed to the Premier. As you know, Ontario is in the midst of a jobs crisis. There is a frightening paradox here in Ontario, where we have high unemployment at the same time that we have a skilled trades shortage. In fact, your own Ministry of Finance estimates that there will be a million positions unfilled by 2021 in skilled trades.

Premier, we brought forward an idea yesterday to create 200,000 new positions for electricians, plumbers, welders and HVAC operators, to actually put that talent to work here in the province of Ontario. I hope you've had time to review our proposal. Will you support the PC plan to modernize our apprenticeship system?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, first of all, I am pleased to take the question. I certainly support the thrust of my honourable colleague's purpose here, which is to ensure that we have a highly skilled and educated workforce and that, amongst other things, we continue to invest in and support apprenticeships and the trades.

To that end we've established a College of Trades. It's the first of its kind in Canada, I am proud to say. It's designed to ensure that all our young people and all our families see the skilled trades as a real, viable career option for them.

It's also to ensure that the college itself takes responsibility for dealing with issues like ratios. I'll provide a bit more information in the supplementary.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, only one quarter of the apprentices actually complete their job training. That's a fact from Colleges Ontario. So of the 50 or so young people we saw here today who aspire to put their considerable skills and energy to work in the trades—as welders, HVAC operators, plumbers or bricklayers, for example, Speaker—only one quarter under your current system actually finish their training.

Premier, I think you would admit that the apprenticeship system in Ontario is stuck in the 1970s when it comes to its ratios. We are now in 2011. Other provinces have modernized their systems and brought them into the 21st century.

Regardless of the College of Trades, Premier, would you at least agree that it's time to bring our ratios into the 21st century and move to a one-to-one journeyman-to-apprentice ratio?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** First of all, I think it's important to understand what has happened in terms of some of the basic numbers, because I believe that we have a very strong record when it comes to supporting apprenticeships in Ontario. More than 120,000 apprentices are learning a trade today; that's nearly 60,000 more than when we first earned the privilege of serving Ontarians in government. Annual apprenticeship registrations have grown from 17,000 to more than 29,000.

On the matter of ratios, Speaker, my honourable colleague will know we have changed eight; on their watch in government, they changed none. We've established a college, and that college has the responsibility in the upcoming year, 2012, to re-examine 34 ratios, including plumbers, electricians and steamfitters. We've assigned that responsibility to an independent arm's-length college. I would ask my honourable colleague to have confidence in that college.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, Premier, you know we don't have confidence in the college. You know we don't because, basically, you're putting many union bosses in charge; I think five out of eight on your board to date. And I think, as I brought up to you in the House already, Premier, that the majority of employer groups—those that will actually create the jobs—have opposed the college and have called for its abolishment.

Let me ask you directly—you mentioned ratios. In Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Manitoba, for every journeyman bricklayer, they can have one apprentice. Under your outdated system from the 1970s, you need five journeymen for one apprentice. That means that job opportunities are cut by 80% here in Ontario.

Will you at the very least, agree, Premier, that the other provinces have moved forward, that clearly our ratios are stuck in the 1970s and should be modernized toward a one-to-one system that exists in those provinces?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would say to my honourable colleague that language such as “union bosses” is more properly relegated to the 1970s and even past that. I think our shared responsibility is to find a way to move forward.

We've set up a new college, and I would encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at the makeup of the college. It is made up of one half employer representatives and one half employee representatives. I'd encourage him to look at that.

I want to remind him as well, Speaker, that the college's mandate is to re-examine 34 separate ratios, including plumbers, electricians and steamfitters. That's their job, and they're going to take that on for all of us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

1040

## APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier on the same subject: Your 1970s apprenticeship system means a lot of young people can't get jobs in the trades today—I pointed out, when it comes to bricklayers. Similarly, when it comes to electricians, there's a one-to-one ratio, meaning for every journeyman, they can hire one apprentice and create a job opportunity. Here in Ontario you have to have three journeymen, which means that as a result, the job opportunities are cut to a third.

Premier, here's something very important, too, and this is your own Ministry of Finance. We are actually producing 46% fewer tradespeople per capita than the rest of Canada. So we have less than half that are actually getting their position in the trades. Doesn't that tell you the system is outdated and it's time for you to give direction to move to a one-to-one ratio and create jobs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again I want to say to my honourable colleague that I really do recommend that he place his confidence in the college. They are now taking on the responsibility of lending shape to the apprenticeship system and skilled trades in the province of Ontario. It's the only college of its kind in the country. I'm glad to say that in Ontario we have elevated the status of the skilled trades to one that I think will inspire confidence in parents and young people alike.

The college is going to take a look at 34 ratios in 2012, and they include brick and stonemasons, cement finishers, construction boilermakers, construction millwrights, drywall finishers, electricians, floor covering installers, general carpenters and so many others as well.

My honourable colleague raises some real issues about ratios, but I have confidence in the college to get that done in the best way for all of us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Respectfully, Premier, you seem to be one of the few, aside from the union leaders who are running the college, to have confidence in this instrument.

Let me give you some examples. Eight construction employers say that your College of Trades is broken and are calling for its abolition: the Heavy Construction Association of Toronto, Merit Ontario, the Ontario Electrical League, the Ontario General Contractors Association, the road builders, the sewer and water main contractors, the progressive contractors, the residential construction council. I know there are unions that oppose your approach too, Premier.

I mean, we're talking about hundreds and hundreds and thousands of jobs here. They're the ones who have no faith in your system—that you're handing over the decisions to people who have a special interest, Premier. So it's not just us. Hundreds and thousands say they don't have confidence in this.

It's your role. It's your job. You're the one who can make the call. It's one simple regulatory change. Don't create a new bureaucracy; make the change. Create the jobs today. Open up 200,000 positions. Won't you show leadership and do the right thing?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, if my honourable colleague is interested in jobs, then I would ask him to support our healthy homes renovation tax credit, which will create over 10,500 jobs on an annual basis.

Again, we've set up a college. It is independent; it is arm's-length; it enjoys equal representation from employers and employee groups. I think we should give the college a chance to do what it was set up to do. It's specifically mandated to take a look at 34 ratios this coming calendar year. I think we should leave that responsibility to them. Let them take a look at it, let them be thoughtful, let them then be decisive, Speaker. I'm sure they're going to give expression to the public interest.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplement—

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, Premier, I don't think the folks in the industry believe that. They believe, basically, you are handing over the decision-making to the special interests, those that have a special interest in maintaining high ratios to limit the number of people who are coming into the field. I think that's clear. And that's not just me, Speaker, that's all of the associations representing hundreds of thousands of jobs across the province.

The Premier—one thing he's right about: This is the only such animal in all of Canada. The other nine provinces don't have that. To me, that tells me he's actually down the wrong path, because they've moved forward. They've moved into the 21st century. He's stuck in the 1970s on this.

It worked in nine other provinces; they didn't need a new bureaucracy. They didn't need to hand over the decision-making to some special interest groups. They had a Premier—seven provinces, different political parties—who had the courage to do the right thing, who had a serious plan, who moved it into the 21st century. Why won't you show the leadership that we will, Premier, and

move to a one-to-one ratio and create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades in the province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to remind my honourable colleague that on their watch, during their eight years in government, they changed no ratios—none. There were concerns expressed at that time, Speaker, and they chose to do nothing. We chose to get involved on eight separate occasions; we've changed eight ratios. Now we've set up an arm's-length college. The responsibility of that college, among other things in the upcoming calendar year, is to re-examine 34 separate ratios.

I think we should place our confidence in that college that enjoys equal representation from employer and employee groups. Let them do their job. Let's have confidence in that new college. It's our new college, and we should be proud of it.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. When the Premier announced his plans to establish the southwestern economic development fund, he noted a study from KPMG that showed this is an effective means to leverage investment and create jobs. This is what he claims.

My question to the Premier is, why hasn't he conducted a similar study into the effectiveness of his corporate tax giveaways?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I know my honourable colleague and I see things differently in this regard, but I think in order to build a competitive economy, we need to bring a multi-faceted approach. That includes investing in the skills and education levels of our people. It includes investing in our infrastructure. It includes modernizing and rebuilding our electricity system.

And yes, it includes making sure we have a competitive tax system. It's no longer just a matter of ensuring we are better than the US competition; we've got to take a look at what's happening in other parts of the world as well. I'm informed that our corporate tax rates today come in about the mid-level when it comes to the European competition. So we need to keep an eye on the big picture when it comes to the competitiveness of our taxes and ensure as well that it's just part of a broad approach to ensuring that we have a competitive economy here in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, the Premier plans to invest about 30 times more money into corporate tax giveaways than into the new southwestern economic development fund. Independent studies by groups like the Conference Board of Canada have indicated that this is one of the least effective ways to create jobs and stimulate the economy.

At a time when every dollar counts, Speaker, why is the Premier pushing ahead with a plan that costs billions and billions of dollars without any evidence at all that it's working?



**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I think it was in the 2010 budget we announced our package of tax reforms, and that included \$12 billion in tax reductions for families, for people, and I think it's about \$5 billion for our businesses.

I remind my honourable colleague as well that in terms of external assessments of just how well we're doing and how competitive we've become, I refer her to FDI, foreign direct investment, which has determined that we are now the second most attractive jurisdiction in all of North America for foreign investment. I'd refer her as well to Forbes magazine, that issue in particular that has catapulted Canada from fifth to first place in terms of being the best place in the world for business to invest. The single most important reason for that escalation, Speaker, in terms of our attractiveness was because of the tax changes that we've made here in Ontario. I'd recommend that my colleague take those into account when she assesses corporate taxes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, the Premier expects families to buy into his corporate tax cut plan, but he can't even get some of his own cabinet colleagues to buy in.

Corporate tax giveaways and sky-high CEO salaries in the public sector are an absolute necessity for this Premier, but tackling the crisis in senior care, making life more affordable, not so much. Why won't the Premier even consider the possibility that billions and billions of dollars diverted into corporate tax giveaways doesn't create jobs and doesn't stimulate our economy?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, you know, it really is easy to pass off corporations and businesses as a kind of evil, I guess. But the fact of the matter is they employ people, lots of people. Families count on them for their jobs and their sense of hopefulness about their future.

I want to recommend one other piece of information to my honourable colleague. Because of the tax changes that we have made, in particular the corporate tax reductions, we are now witnessing a dramatic increase in investments in equipment and machinery, which marks the beginning of an investment in productivity—additional competitiveness—which means that our businesses can grab more market share, which means they can hire more people.

1050

So, in fact, I would argue with my honourable colleague on this score. These corporate tax cuts are in fact having an impact on the front lines. They will mean more jobs.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question is to the Premier. The Premier has called the Ring of Fire "the most promising mining opportunity in Canada in a century." My question to the Premier is: Is he willing to let these good

processing jobs from this great opportunity be shipped overseas?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I do share the same enthusiasm as my honourable colleague, the leader of the third party, when it comes to the promise to be found in the Ring of Fire. They tell us, Speaker, that it's one of the most exciting mining finds in Canada in the last 100 years.

We are going to work with the community, we are going to work with our First Nations, and we're going to work with folks in the north to make sure we get this right. There is a tremendous opportunity before all of us, and we will work as hard as we can, I say to my honourable colleague, to ensure that we maximize the benefits for the people of Ontario.

If my honourable colleague has any specific recommendations in that regard, we'd be most willing to listen to those.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, Cliffs Natural Resources says it plans to send chromite concentrate mined in the Ring of Fire to China for processing. That would redirect good-paying jobs, value-added jobs out of northern Ontario. By refusing to answer the question yesterday, the minister suggested that he was okay with it. I want to know if the Premier's okay with it.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I say to my honourable colleague, we're going to do everything we can together to maximize the benefits for the people of Ontario.

I know where my friend wants to go on this, and I can't agree with her in that regard. She would suggest that we put up a wall around our resources sector here in Ontario. The fact of the matter is, we receive raw minerals from other parts of the world. We bring them into our province, we process them here, and we create good jobs here. So that's not the kind of fight I want to get into with the international community.

Having said that, I again say to my honourable colleague, let us see if we can find a way, all of us together, working with northerners in particular, to ensure that we maximize the benefits of the development of the Ring of Fire for the benefit of all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, the sad and frustrating thing is, we've seen this story before. We saw it with Xstrata. Xstrata in Timmins put 700 people out of work after they exported processing jobs across the border into Quebec.

Cliffs claims that by processing the chromite into concentrate, they won't even need the province's approval under the Mining Act to send that quasi-processed material over to China for full processing.

I want to ask the Premier very clearly, is this something that he agrees with? Does he believe that this is the right solution and in the best interest of the province and northern Ontario people?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We are part of the global economy. We are a free-trading jurisdiction.

I would remind my honourable colleague that, today, in Ontario there are thousands and thousands of jobs that are associated with us receiving from other provinces, other countries, indeed other continents, minerals that are coming in for us to process here.

I say to my honourable colleague, do we really want to get into a trade battle based on protectionism, where we put up walls, because I think, in the end, that will cost us thousands of jobs, and it will hurt our families.

Having said that, let's find a way to maximize the benefits for the people of Ontario when it comes to developing intelligently, thoughtfully and responsibly the Ring of Fire.

### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question today is also to the Premier. After eight years of trying to create jobs your way, the results are in: 300,000 manufacturing jobs are gone; 58 straight months of Ontario trailing Canada in job creation; and 75,000 full-time jobs lost just last month alone.

You tried it your way and you failed. You refused to listen to our plan to modernize the apprenticeship system and create 200,000 jobs right here in Ontario. Instead, you take pride in creating a looming boondoggle called the Ontario College of Trades.

Premier, can you inform the House today of how much money the College of Trades has cost Ontario taxpayers up to this point?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** As the member should know, this is a private sector partnership not borne by the government.

It's fascinating. We talk about proposals here. This is the Conservative Party's research position on trades: three sentences.

This is two years of work by leading professionals and 26 consultations with business and labour leaders, leading to one of the most well-researched, well-executed projects ever.

One sheet, three sentences; consultation with 26 industry business associations and labour groups.

It's interesting to me, Mr. Speaker. These folks think we're cozy with labour because we want labour leaders to sit down with business people to look at these. Those folks over there think we're cozy with business because we think they need some tax breaks to create jobs. Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock.

Member, I am going to get some advice. I would wish that members be reminded of the rule of using props. I would probably have ruled on that if I had been quicker on my feet. So I would remind everyone about props at all times.

I will accept the member's supplementary question.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Thank you, Speaker.

I didn't expect that you would actually divulge information that has been so closely guarded and hailed by your good friends in the Working Families Coalition. The key objective of the College of Trades is to compulsorily certify many additional trades that are functioning absolutely fine right now, and they will do this with no known public criteria. This will cost tens of thousands of jobs in the housing and road-building industries alone, as well as drive up the cost of all construction.

Minister, just when are you and the College of Trades planning on informing the construction workers of your plan to have their trades compulsorily certified, and how much will tradespeople be charged to belong to this unnecessary institution?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, by 2025 we have to create 362,000 apprenticeships. That is the serious work that this government is involved in.

The comment was made by the Leader of the Opposition—I wish they'd actually read these reports; maybe they would come up with better questions. Maybe the leader should ask his critic to read the reports and then ask some questions.

It's interesting, because the comment was made, Mr. Speaker, out of 1970s-style thinking. You were in power many more years than we were since the 1970s. You cut apprenticeship by 74%; you didn't designate one ratio. You didn't have years, you had decades to do it, and you did nothing. Now you've got ants in your pants and you're all terrified by this. It's absolutely hysterically funny.

We consulted with 26 trade organizations—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** To the Minister of Transportation: Reports indicate now that Metrolinx is looking to privatize the proposed Eglinton crosstown transit line. It seems that, almost weekly, there is another setback on this project resulting from the McGuinty government's mishandling of the Eglinton line, from soaring costs to technical challenges to lengthy delays. Is the privatization of this line just another indication of how badly off the rails this project has gone?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member for the question and I'm pleased to clarify the situation for him. The Eglinton crosstown line is an \$8.2-billion investment on the part of our government and will create 82,000 jobs. With investment that significant, it's natural that Metrolinx look at all procurement options to achieve the best value for taxpayer money.

No decision has been made at this point in time. This is one option and discussions are ongoing. No matter which way we move forward, value for taxpayer money, community consultation and seamless service are absolutely critical to this project. Metrolinx has, in fact, al-



ready started community consultations on the crosstown line.

1100

Most importantly, I want to note that alternative financing and procurement does not mean private operation of the facility. When Infrastructure Ontario does procurement on a hospital, we still have doctors and nurses funded through OHIP—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Thank you, Speaker. Toronto once had an affordable, publicly run and widely supported plan for light rail expansion across Toronto: It was called Transit City. Then the McGuinty government systematically dismantled this plan, delaying and shortening routes with a \$4-billion cut, and willingly let Mayor Ford spend almost the entire budget on one line while cancelling or cutting lines to underserved neighbourhoods across this city.

Does the minister really think that privatizing transit will get the Eglinton line back on track?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this government is known to work co-operatively with cities and municipalities across this province and has done so with the city of Toronto and with the TTC. We have a memorandum of understanding that is a consensus between the TTC, Toronto and the province of Ontario. We are still discussing the issue with them, we're negotiating with them, and we will come up with a consensus position, as we have in the past.

We work co-operatively with our partners, we will continue to do so, and it will be in consultation with the public: strong, strong communications with the public as well as the TTC and the city of Toronto.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Yesterday, the minister introduced legislation to create the southwestern Ontario development fund and continue the eastern Ontario development fund. This is an important step and people are interested to know more about it and how the program will work. I know because I've been speaking to people in Windsor about it.

This bill has widespread support from many groups across southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario. There is concern, however, because the opposition critic yesterday expressed that he does not support this bill.

In my community there is a lot of support and optimism for this initiative. People want to see us working together, putting jobs ahead of politics. Is the minister confident that this initiative does indeed have support across the region it would serve?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'd like to thank the member for her advocacy for jobs in southwestern Ontario, which is so important for her region. I know she knows that as well.

I, too, was concerned by the comments that the critic made yesterday in opposition to this—and frankly quite surprised, given the support and interest that I've received on a one-on-one basis from many of his colleagues in the PC caucus, who are very interested in the jobs that these funds could possibly create in their communities. Mr. Speaker, I was surprised as well that he would take that position without hearing out all sides that will occur when this legislation comes forward and is debated in this House.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that his colleagues who have expressed an interest to me about getting jobs in their communities from this fund will persuade the critic to think twice about this, persuade the critic to hear out all sides and listen to groups like the Southwest Economic—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Speaker, we know that all of us are committed to strengthening Ontario's economy and to making Ontario the best place in North America to do business, but this can only be achieved if we have strong regional economies.

The eastern Ontario development fund has been in place for a number of years now. Ontarians want to be confident that their tax dollars go to good use. These are important investments being made. Is the minister confident that the regional structure for these funds is the right one, and has the eastern Ontario development fund been successful?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Absolutely. Since the eastern Ontario development fund was established in 2008, the Ontario government has invested \$52 million, Mr. Speaker, leveraging private sector investment of \$485 million. These investments have created or retained 11,700 jobs in communities in eastern Ontario, and believe me, Mr. Speaker, I know those communities very much welcome those jobs.

This fund has also demonstrated what we call a higher leverage rate—that's the grant versus the total investment—than regional economic funds in other jurisdictions. Really, Mr. Speaker, that's what it's all about: making investments here on behalf of the province of Ontario, leveraging those investments to even larger investments on the part of the private sector, and creating jobs. It has worked in eastern Ontario; it will work in southwestern Ontario.

It's something we on this side of the House are very, very proud of. I really recommend to both opposition parties that they take a good look at this, because their constituents in southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario are going to be on them for this to help us create jobs in those regions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, last week we heard that Global Sticks of Thunder Bay has shut down, and workers are still waiting for their paycheques.

As you know, the Ontario government has a big investment in Global Sticks; you gave them \$7 million. On May 20 of this year, you put out a press release. It said, "McGuinty Government Creating 130 Jobs for Oliver Paipoonge Township." My question is: How is it possible that you so recently gave them this money and the jobs have disappeared?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Listen, Speaker: We're very, very proud of the northern Ontario heritage fund and the incredible opportunity it brings to northern Ontario, whether it be northeastern Ontario or northwestern Ontario. It brings real jobs and real opportunities.

The fact of the matter is that since 2003, when we re-profiled the northern Ontario heritage fund away from what it used to be before, under the previous Tory government, one that used to fund golf tournaments, we turned it into a job creator. In fact, statistics would indicate that 17,918 jobs have been created because of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp., and we're very proud of that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Again, to the minister: I don't know where he gets these numbers from; he just picks them out of the air. These are real jobs I'm talking about.

Minister, reports say that it's the Ontario government that is creating the problems for Global Sticks. It has been death by 1,000 cuts. The plant first broke ground in 2009. It took 1,137 days from the start of this project before they were operating. It took two years to get the C of A for the boiler from the Ministry of the Environment. They had no wood supply and they had to get wood from Minnesota.

My question is: After investing over \$7 million of taxpayer funds, what exactly is the minister doing to help get Global Sticks back on track and open its doors?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Mr. Speaker, we are working very closely with Global Sticks and have from the beginning. They came forward to us a couple of years ago with a good business plan for a good product, and they had good markets. We did due diligence, provided them with some significant support, but they continued to have some challenges. They came to us and asked for a wood facility licence—no need for a crown allocation. We helped them with that; we were happy to provide that as well.

I wish I had a lot of time to discuss this. What I can tell you is that indeed we continue to work closely with them, including, when they identified that they still had some challenges, we identified over 35 different suppliers of wood for the white birch that they needed for the product.

We are proud of the investment. We understand they're working their way through a restructuring. We're optimistic that indeed they will do so. We will continue to work closely with them. This is an example of a company that came forward with a good product and a good market. We—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## SECURITIES INDUSTRY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, Competition Commissioner Melanie Aitken informed the Maple Group consortium that she has concerns, and I quote what she said, "about the likely competitive effects of the proposed transactions ... primarily in connection with equities trading and clearing and settlement services in Canada."

With this new development, the proposed acquisition of the TMX by Maple Group has clearly been put in some jeopardy and doubt. Will the minister reconvene the select committee that looked into the TMX-LSE merger in light of this new development in order to protect Ontario's interests?

1110

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think, given that this is a federal process, we will have to rely on the federal government to protect Ontario's interests.

I'd remind the member opposite that, in fact, the Competition Bureau has stated some concerns, concerns which we signalled last spring. I think the response of the Maple Group to the concerns is that we need to work with the regulator to address those concerns.

I think the work the select committee did last spring was good work. There's also the Ontario Securities Commission, as well as the Quebec securities commission, that have regulatory issues to deal with.

I think it's appropriate for the proper constitutional authorities and regulatory authorities to let this process unfold. I think that's in Ontario's interests, both in the short and long term.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I am glad the Minister of Finance agrees that the select committee did a good job last time. I think all members of this House acknowledge the excellent work done by the all-party select committee that looked at the original bid by the LSE for the TMX.

In the spirit of all-party co-operation in this new minority environment, surely the minister will reconvene, or will agree to reconvene, the select committee, and not just pass it over to the federal government.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We look forward to working with both opposition parties on a variety of issues. We had, I thought, a very good meeting yesterday, where you, on behalf of your party and leader, put forward some very good suggestions for moving forward, so I do want to do that.

The Competition Bureau has clear authority here; they have the expertise. We have to rely on that regulatory process, in my view, which is established in law, endorsed at both the federal and provincial levels, to take its course. There have been concerns expressed about this. I think this is the right organization. I think that the Maple Group needs to work with the regulators at both the federal and provincial levels.



I'm proud that it was this government and Premier that first raised questions about the control of our major stock markets and our derivative markets. I think the Legislature—all of us—did a good job, and I think we need to let the regulators follow their processes and require the Maple Group to respond to the challenges raised.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. There has been a great deal of interest in Ontario's clean energy economy. Ontario has become a global leader in clean technology and manufacturing through the North-America-leading Green Energy Act and feed-in tariff program. Despite the opposition's constant threats to destroy this economy, it has thrived, creating jobs and establishing manufacturing facilities across the province.

However, we are facing uncertain times in the global economy and my constituents in Oak Ridges–Markham are concerned about the impact on our clean energy economy.

Can the minister please provide this House with an update on the status of Ontario's clean energy economy?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member from Oak Ridges–Markham asks a very important question, because we are in a worldwide fight for jobs. The Green Energy Act and the clean, green economy has not only helped clean up the air for Ontarians, but we've got more than 20,000 jobs and \$26 billion in investments—investments which have gone to places like Oxford county and Tillsonburg; hundreds of jobs in a Siemens plant.

I can tell you, Speaker, these are construction jobs that employ apprentices like the ones who were here yesterday, and journeypersons—jobs that will come to a crashing halt if the bill from the member for Prince Edward–Hastings ever became law, because it would create such uncertainty that the jobs that many are relying on in urban and rural Ontario will not be available and investment will not flow into the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you, Minister, and I'm certainly happy to hear that Ontario's clean energy economy is still a global leader in manufacturing.

I'm pleased that Ontario is on track to replacing dirty coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of power, and this is cleaning up the air for my constituents, their children and their grandchildren.

Minister, you said that Ontario's clean energy economy is about to transition from a procurement stage to a construction stage. I think that we're all interested in the impacts of this evolution and what it will mean for Ontario's clean energy program.

Minister, can you please tell us what this transition in the clean energy economy will mean for jobs in the sector and for existing manufacturers of clean energy technology?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We are in a phase when we've had the very important initial two years—lots of

excitement, lots of contracts. Now they're beginning to be built out, and we're constructing all over the province.

We have a feed-in tariff review to make sure that our green energy economy has a solid foundation for the future. I know members like the one from Oxford and like the one from Newmarket–Aurora, where they're hiring with Northland Power, creating hundreds of jobs, buying solar panels, building them in his riding—you know, that's the type of job that will disappear if the member from Prince Edward–Hastings has his day and his bill ever becomes law.

What do you say to the families who are looking for those jobs? What do you say to the apprentices and the journeypersons who are involved in those jobs? What do you say to Ontarians? Where are the jobs? They're in the green—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Speaker, my question is to the Premier. On November 16, we saw nothing but yet another example of public information being hidden from public scrutiny and accountability. Hamilton city councillors were told that they would not gain access to details about three bids for the Ivor Wynne football stadium rebuild for the 2015 Pan Am Games—that is, unless they waive their right to inform the public.

How can the people of Ontario be certain that Infrastructure Ontario's cloaks of secrecy are not merely shielding government cronyism?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The procurement that it does is recognized as among the best in the world, internationally. Infrastructure Ontario has completed 52 projects, worth \$21 billion. They have come in on time and under budget.

In terms of procurement, they are in a competition process to try to get the best prices possible for the projects that they're working on. They cannot disclose the information until after the contract is let and all the details have been negotiated.

We have to be really proud of the work that Infrastructure Ontario is doing. It has tremendous credibility in the construction industry and in the financial sectors. Let them do their work, and they'll come in on time and under budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** How can the minister justify the endemic secrecy of the Pan Am planning? It's the same endemic secrecy that blocks Hamilton city councillors from holding government to account unless they waive the right to inform the public; the same endemic secrecy that facilitates the sole-sourced equestrian deal in Caledon, where Pan Am CEO Ian Troop's brother benefited when he sold land to the bidder for the development; and the same secrecy that denies freedom-of-information re-

quests by the opposition to discover the secretariat's updated budget forecasts.

Minister, will you grant free access to public information so that Ontarians can be sure that hand-picked Liberal cronies are not serving their personal best interests cloaked behind Kafkaesque policies?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** First of all, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the member on his election. Having just gone through an election campaign, I'm sure the member is fully aware of the tremendous level of investment in Hamilton and the confidence that the government of Ontario has shown in Hamilton with respect to the infrastructure that is ongoing there. It has been unprecedented in terms of what we have provided to the city of Hamilton.

We want to implement that significant infrastructure in a professional, responsible manner. That means that, in the procurement process, it is absolutely imperative that the information remain confidential until the amount is known, until the contract is announced, because otherwise, the competition is destroyed. So please understand the process.

I'd be happy to sit down with the member and talk to him about the operations of Infrastructure Ontario and most—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. There seems to be a growing consensus that bullying in our schools is a problem that needs to be confronted. Students who want to tackle this problem have a simple question: Will they be able to establish gay-straight alliance clubs in their schools?

1120

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, today I had the opportunity, together with the Minister of Education, to speak about a new initiative. I certainly hope we can count on support from all members of this Legislature. What we simply want to do is convey to all our children in all our schools that they have our support. We want our schools to be warm, welcoming, safe, secure and accepting. We want all our kids to feel free to be who they are.

In response to my honourable colleague's question, yes, we're going to require that, at every school where students request that this be put in place, they be permitted to organize themselves with a gay-straight alliance. It may not be that name that they use, but the important thing is we're going to have that kind of supportive group there available in all our schools.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, I was starting to feel a little bit positive and then, all of a sudden, got disappointed near the end there.

Nearly two-thirds of LGBTQ students and their parents say that they feel unsafe in their schools. There have

been at least three young people who have taken their own lives in the province of Ontario. It is heartbreaking, Speaker, but it is also completely unacceptable.

Can we finally put the politics aside and answer a simple question? Will students who want a GSA club in their schools be allowed to put one together and have one in their schools?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Yes. The answer to that, very simply, is yes. In fact, that wording is in the bill. I appreciate the sincere passion demonstrated by my honourable colleague, and I think we have a shared purpose. I invite all legislators in this assembly to come together on this very important issue.

We need to be able to say to all our kids in all our schools that we're going to stand up for them and that you will not be the subject of discrimination on the basis of gender or race or place of origin or tradition or culture or sexual orientation. We need to speak with one voice on this issue together as adults in the province of Ontario. Our intention through this bill is to send that message loud and clear.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. These are uncertain times in the global economy and challenging times for our families. This is the time to make bold choices to continue our investment in developing the skills and education of the people of Ontario. In tough times, we need to make the right choices while we take the steps to move forward together.

Speaker, the families in my constituency are worried about the rising cost of post-secondary education. Getting students to pursue post-secondary education is critical to making Ontario the most attractive place in the world for knowledge-based jobs.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, what is the minister doing to ensure that post-secondary education is affordable and accessible for college and university students at this time?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to congratulate the new member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who is joining us in the House. It's great to have another former mayor amongst us; some of us have a special affinity for that.

Under the Premier's leadership, and I think the Premier has stated this over and over again, education is an unqualified priority for our government. We have added 200,000 spaces, so 200,000 more Ontarians get a yes when they apply for college or university; they used to get a no. We have increased the number of students who receive OSAP support by 66%, and we have a program for low-income students that gives them 50% of their tuition.

As you know, we are moving forward now on our election commitment of a 30% reduction for first-entry students in our post-secondary education system. If there



is a supplementary, I'll be happy to elaborate on the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you, Minister. I remember the time when our government took office in 2003. Successive NDP and PC governments had abandoned our colleges and universities, leaving us with too many students jammed into cold, outdated buildings while allowing tuition to skyrocket. I am proud that our government has taken the action to implement the 30% Ontario Trillium tuition grant, an important investment to the future of Ontario students.

Students entering their first year of post-secondary education have raised their concern about the 30% tuition grant. Their concern is that they will not be eligible for the grant since they are enrolled in a professional program. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: How is the minister going to ensure that these first-year students in professional programs are eligible for the 30% tuition grant?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** This grant applies to families whose household income is less than \$160,000; to students who are within four years of high school, which will be upwards of about 340,000 students. It applies to all first-entry programs. So, if you're going to Ryerson University and you go into nursing, you're in a first-entry program and you'll apply those grants.

It is one of the most significant assistances to working families in difficult times. It's not just an investment in young people—especially those from smaller communities like you represent, who often have to travel to get the specializations they want and have a particularly difficult challenge and additional costs, which is why we have the satellite campus program and others. It's also important to all of us as we get older, because we're going to rely on the next generation to support those of us with greying hair around here, and we want them to have the best opportunity for the best jobs.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier: I'm very pleased that you're going to take further steps to respond to the very serious issue of bullying and its devastating consequences on our students—all of our students. We need to provide them with a safe and secure environment for learning.

Today, after two years of consultations with students, with parents, with educators, I introduce for the first time in the province of Ontario a piece of legislation designed with the sole purpose of comprehensively addressing the problem of bullying in our schools. I would say to you, Premier, it deals with raising awareness, prevention, accountability and the Ministry of Education assuming leadership. Are you prepared to support this bill?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I thank my honourable colleague for her question, and I thank her for her initiative. I have yet to see the bill, but I think there's good news here. I think a lot of us are on the same page. I look

forward to seeing the bill, learning a bit more about it and seeing what we can do to make common cause.

Again, I think there is a growing sense of responsibility that we share in this Legislature to send a very important message to all of our children, right across this province, who find themselves in any one of our schools, that we are going to stand up for their interest. I get the strongest sense that is exactly the intention of my honourable colleague. As I say, I look forward to looking at her bill closely and seeing what we can do to make common cause on this very important issue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraged because we can no longer implement pieces of legislation that are ad hoc. We need to take a comprehensive approach. We need to ensure accountability. We need to make sure that statistics on bullying that are kept in our schools, in our boards, are provided to the Ministry of Education and that each year, the Minister of Education can report to the public as to what's going on in order that we can do everything possible to reduce the instances of bullying. This bill will do that.

1130

This bill will also provide a process to deal with the reporting, the monitoring, the investigating. This bill will also make sure that our teachers are provided with inservicing in order that they can respond and intervene appropriately. Also, and finally, it makes the Ministry of the Education the lead body tasked with devising and implementing a province-wide bullying prevention and intervention policy. Will you do so?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, Speaker, this is all very encouraging. As I understand it, our bill as well takes into account a responsibility that we place on the ministry to collect data and to make that public. What our bill essentially does is give the force of law to policies that pre-existed. It adds to that, but essentially it says to our school boards, "We're going to step it up now when it comes to treating bullying seriously. We're going to impose a legal obligation on you this time around to prevent bullying, to intervene where it takes place and to ensure that there are progressive consequences, up to and including expulsion."

So I think, Speaker, there's a lot of common ground here. I'm encouraged by the information I'm receiving from my honourable colleague and I'm convinced that we can and will in fact work together on this.

#### HOME CARE

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Yesterday, Port Colborne city council in my riding unanimously passed a motion calling for stable home care funding. The Niagara peninsula, as you know, has the largest concentration of seniors in Ontario and Canada, yet the services that these seniors have access to, to stay healthy in their homes, are hard to access and are inconsistent in the Niagara peninsula and across the province. Port Colborne, in their



motion, asked for the minister's help. Will the minister work with Port Colborne and other local municipalities across our province to develop a stable and comprehensive program of home care in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you very much for the question, because enhancing supports for home care is a key priority for my ministry and for our government. We believe—in fact, we know—that the more we can do to help support people in their own homes actually takes pressure off our hospitals and our emergency departments and our long-term-care homes, so investing in the community, providing funding to do that, is exactly what we are doing.

We have significantly increased funding to the home care sector. We've also added new programs like our Aging at Home program that is doing exactly what the member opposite has talked about: helping support people in their own homes.

Speaker, we are very encouraged by progress that has been made across the province in bringing people home after they've been in hospital. I'll be happy to speak more to that in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** The motion notes the importance of supportive homemaking services. Those services have been seriously eroded over the last 20 years. The CCAC criteria provides for 90 hours of care in their homes, but the average person is only getting 30 hours of care across the province, and in many cases housekeeping is not allowed. For many seniors, it isn't a complex health issue that forces them to move out of their home; it's rather the daily tasks of cooking, laundry and housekeeping. During the election, the Ontario New Democrats recognized this and we developed a plan to provide seniors with the supportive services they need. Will the minister work with us, the local municipalities and the health care groups to develop a province-wide plan for supporting seniors in their homes?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, as I said in the first question, helping people stay at home is a very high priority for us. That is what our healthy homes renovation tax credit is part of. We are adding three million hours of PSW support for exactly the kind of functions that the member opposite has spoken about. We've got some great successes. We are now seeing fewer people getting on the list for long-term care. We're seeing more people coming home from hospital, stabilizing at home so that they don't need to go into long-term care. This is exactly where we need to go, and this is where we are going.

## DIABETES

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. November is Diabetes Month. In Ontario, diabetes is on the rise. Today, an estimated 1.2 million people have been diagnosed with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. This astounding number represents 8.3% of the population.

Diabetes is serious and needs managing. If neglected, the complications of diabetes can lead to serious long-term complications, including heart and kidney disease, stroke, blindness and, often, amputation.

Diabetes also counts for a significant number of emergency room visits each year and costs the health care system an estimated \$4.9 billion every year.

Mr. Speaker, to the outstanding Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Can the minister please tell us what this government is doing to help Ontarians living with and affected by diabetes?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker, through you to the outstanding member from Peterborough, for this really important question, because November is Diabetes Awareness Month.

Speaker, I'm very proud of what we have been able to do. For example, Ontario is the first province in Canada to fund diabetes insulin pumps for young people and adults with type 1 diabetes. We're also creating centres of excellence in bariatric surgery. We are funding over 2,000 procedures a year. It means less waiting for people. It also means care closer to home.

Through the MedsCheck program, people with diabetes have access to a pharmacist who will help them with their medications. We're increasing the number of diabetes education teams, Speaker. These are teams of people who work with people who have diabetes or are at risk of diabetes, and they are really improving the health care for people with diabetes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Just a reminder, again: good question period. Thank you very much. I believe we are beginning to use our inside voices, and I appreciate that.

The second thing I'd like to mention to you is that there are no deferred votes today, so this House stands recessed until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### LAKE SIMCOE REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Mr. Speaker, 2011 marks the 60th anniversary of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. For the last six decades, the conservation authority has worked tirelessly to protect Lake Simcoe, our rivers, streams and watershed.

One of its greatest strengths is its ability to work together and build partnerships with municipalities, landowners, environmental groups and the general public. It prevents erosion along watercourses, helps to prevent flooding, preserves water quality, protects wetlands and provides key scientific research. Thousands of local residents enjoy using its conservation areas, and thousands have worked with the conservation authority in its projects.



Its work as an educator is vital in teaching our young people about the environment, about the effects of conservation on our lives, and how they can help to do their part. The outdoor education centre at Scanlon Creek has taught thousands of children about natural heritage and stewardship.

So congratulations to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority on 60 years of work to make our watershed healthy, safe and a wonderful place to live. Thank you to all of the staff, supporters and volunteers for all the hard work you have done to make the conservation authority such a success.

#### EVENTS IN HAMILTON EAST— STONEY CREEK

**Mr. Paul Miller:** In May 2008, I told the Legislature about the deteriorating facilities at Winona public elementary school. Winona public school has grown in leaps and bounds from its humble beginnings as a small rural school. The current facility is now home to over 650 students and serves as a glowing example of educational achievement.

I'm excited to announce that the school will be re-locating to a brand new facility following the Christmas holidays. A tribute to the school will be held tomorrow night. This event will allow students, faculty, alumnae and friends the opportunity to reflect on the rich history that has characterized this institution and to celebrate that the school will finally have a facility that mirrors its reputation within our community. Congratulations.

I would also like to congratulate my constituent and friend Judy Kloosterman on her new position beginning in the new year as community developer in east Hamilton. Judy has given 18 years of unparalleled dedication to our community as a coordinator at CATCH, a group providing support for children and families in east Hamilton. She will undoubtedly bring the same spirit and enthusiasm in her new role. The people of Hamilton are lucky to have her working in our community. Congratulations, Judy. I look forward to continuing to work together for years to come.

#### LAKE SIMCOE REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

**Ms. Helena Jacek:** I would also like to recognize the 60th anniversary of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. The authority's leadership in the restoration and protection of the environment and the health of Lake Simcoe and its watershed won it the 2009 Thiess International Riverprize.

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is an organization committed to science and research, protection and restoration, and education and outreach, allowing it to effectively respond to changes in our environment.

With the leadership of the mayor of East Gwillimbury, Virginia Hackson, serving as chair, the support of Gayle

Wood as chief administrative officer, and the commitment of many employees and volunteers, the authority has prevented an estimated 16.5 tons of phosphorus from reaching Lake Simcoe each year.

Since being established in 1951, it has come to encompass all of the municipalities bordering the lake, as well as several municipalities that are located in the watershed. It played an integral role in the development of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act of 2008, and has been recognized internationally.

I am certain the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority will continue to work hard to protect the sensitive natural resources located in the watershed, and will do so in collaboration with our community, municipalities, and the provincial government.

Congratulations on 60 successful years of preserving our environment.

#### RICK HANSEN INSTITUTE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to welcome our special guests from the Rick Hansen Institute and others from Ontario's spinal cord injury community, who are joining us today at Queen's Park.

Twenty-five years ago, a man with a dream and a vision set out to cross the globe in his wheelchair to increase awareness of spinal cord injuries. Rick Hansen, with his epic Man In Motion World Tour, crossed the finish line to a banner that read, "The End is Just the Beginning." Today the goal of the Rick Hansen Institute is to reduce the severity of injury and improve health care outcomes for all those with spinal cord injuries. Their goal is a world without paralysis after spinal cord injury.

I would like, on behalf of all of us here in the Legislature, to thank the Rick Hansen Institute, their Ontario-based researchers and their many, many volunteers who are helping those with spinal cord injuries lead fuller and more productive lives. We are very honoured to have you visit us here today at Queen's Park.

#### COMMUNITY CARE EAST YORK

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a wonderful group in my community: Community Care East York.

Community Care East York was founded 40 years ago, in 1971, and 23 years ago, Community Care East York became the very first agency in Ontario to get a home care contract. They held that contract for some 15 years, until 2003, under the capable and wonderful leadership of Jean Greene.

Unfortunately, in 2003, through the competitive bidding process, they were not successful. But never to be undone, they retooled and kept community care going as a wellness, housing and health promotion body that helps seniors.

They will be celebrating their 40th anniversary on December 8 at the York reception hall at 1100 Millwood, in the riding of Don Valley West.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Woohoo!

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yes. But it's bittersweet, because on January 1, 2012, they will be forced to amalgamate with WoodGreen services. They are doing so to protect their staff, and to make sure their resources are maintained and their 8,000 clients continue to receive service. We love everything they've done, we wish them well and we hope the amalgamation goes well.

#### CANADA WORLD YOUTH

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the 40th anniversary of Canada World Youth, a non-profit organization offering international educational programs for young people.

Over the years, 34,000 youth have taken part in exchange and international co-operation programs in over 67 countries. Right now young people from across Ontario are volunteering through Canada World Youth both in Canada and around the world. Their dedicated and passionate contributions to development projects and community building yield concrete and uplifting outcomes in the communities and countries they visit.

Specifically, Canada World Youth programs focus on the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, particularly in environment, health and gender equity.

Mr. Speaker, six youth from my riding of Ottawa Centre are currently involved in Canada World Youth programs. I would like to thank Zoé Bordeleau-Cass, Henry Fiegler, Jordan Bouchard, Cole Fischer, Sebastien Engelmann and Zachary Kershman for their participation in the program.

Canada World Youth continues to transform the lives of thousands of young Canadians by helping them to become active citizens and compassionate leaders. I invite all MPPs in this House to learn more about Canada World Youth and to encourage young people in your communities to consider an incredible experience like this.

#### DAVE GIONET

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that anyone who serves in the armed forces is a hero. They give up their precious time with family and sacrifice their lives so that we can live in a free, democratic society. All too often, our soldiers and veterans go unnoticed and unappreciated. We need to remember and thank them every day, not just once a year.

1510

I met a hero during the recent election campaign who lives in my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London. Master Corporal Dave Gionet served two tours in Afghanistan: in 2005 in Kabul and in 2007 in Kandahar. On his second tour in Kandahar, he encountered three IEDs, improvised explosive devices. On the first IED strike, he saved the life of an American soldier. During the second strike, Master Corporal Gionet saved the life of a fellow crew

member who had become trapped in their damaged vehicle. After freeing the driver, Master Corporal Gionet performed life-saving first aid despite the imminent risk of fire, explosion and enemy attack.

For his actions, Master Corporal Gionet was one of the first recipients of the Medal of Military Valour, awarded for an act of valour or devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy, and the Sacrifice Medal from Her Excellency the Right Hon. Michaëlle Jean, former Governor General of Canada.

#### McMASTER MARAUDERS FOOTBALL TEAM

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure today to rise and congratulate the McMaster Marauders football team on their dramatic Vanier Cup triumph and for returning the trophy to the province of Ontario.

Led by coach Stefan Ptaszek and MVP quarterback Kyle Quinlan, the underdog Marauders took an early lead and withstood a furious second-half comeback by a very strong Laval team. The lead went back and forth before Tyler Crapigna secured the victory for Mac in double overtime in what TSN analyst Duane Forde called the greatest game ever.

Earlier this afternoon, McMaster held a large celebration for the team that won the school's first national football championship. I want to congratulate the team, and specifically three players from my community of Oakville: wide receiver Robert Babic, who tied a Vanier Cup record with 12 receptions in the game, as well as wide receiver Trevor Reid and running back Stephen Kofi-Akuffo. Their contributions, along with many others' from communities throughout Ontario, helped McMaster bring the Vanier Cup right back where it belongs: in the province of Ontario.

#### TREK TO BETHLEHEM IN BALA

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It is often said it takes a whole village to raise a child. On this coming Saturday night, it will take the whole town to successfully stage the annual Trek to Bethlehem in Bala, Muskoka, a town of just over 500 year-round residents. I would like to pay tribute to one of the finest examples of community spirit in this entire province.

Patricia Gidley, chairperson of the organizing committee, tells me that at least one out of every five people in Bala contributes to making the town's Trek to Bethlehem a success. That includes those who voluntarily turn off their house lights along the route, others who make sandwiches for hungry visitors at the Bala Arena, volunteers who turn out to sing carols for hours on end at the community centre and many others who never get recognized. A small team of men with hammers spends all day Friday knocking together the sets that will come alive on Saturday night, and then shows up on Sunday to take it all down again.



This is the 19th year in a row that Bala has turned the circle of streets into a biblical village that tells the story of how Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago. Year after year, it has attracted hundreds of visitors from around Ontario.

The trek's success owes a lot to the organizing efforts of people like Patricia Gidley, Nan Allen, Jack Hutton and many others, but the real credit goes to the entire town of Bala. This year's trek takes place this Saturday evening, December 3, and I would like to encourage all members to come to Bala and congratulate the village of Bala on this great event.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Ms. Broten moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'll make my statement during ministerial statements. Thank you, Speaker.

### ANTI-BULLYING ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA LUTTE CONTRE L'INTIMIDATION

Mrs. Witmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to designate Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in Schools and to provide for bullying prevention curricula, policies and administrative accountability in schools / Projet de loi 14, Loi désignant la Semaine de la sensibilisation à l'intimidation et de la prévention dans les écoles et prévoyant des programmes-cadres, des politiques et une responsabilité administrative à l'égard de la prévention de l'intimidation dans les écoles.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a bill that is the first and only bill that focuses solely on bullying. It's a comprehensive bill that begins with the introduction of bullying prevention into the curriculum in kindergarten and deals with greater accountability and formal reporting processes. It does

address the concerns that we've heard from people in the province of Ontario.

## ONTARIO SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR L'ASSOCIATION DES INGÉNIEURS DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Kwinter moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers / Projet de loi 15, Loi concernant l'Association des ingénieurs de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Mr. Speaker, this reintroduces Bill 148, a bill that received unanimous consent at second reading in the 39th Parliament. It doesn't alter the Professional Engineers Act, but it does provide the legislative authority for the society to be the advocate for the professional engineers.

## PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to amend the Animals for Research Act and the Dog Owners' Liability Act with respect to pit bulls / Projet de loi 16, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche et la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens en ce qui a trait aux pit-bulls.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes, Speaker, thank you. I'd like to also, at this time, say this bill is being co-sponsored by a member from the government side, the member from Welland—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** —Niagara Falls, pardon me, and also from the third party, the member from Highland—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Parkdale—High Park.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** —from Parkdale—High Park.

This bill repeals provisions in the Animals for Research Act relating to the disposition of pit bulls under that act. The bill also repeals provisions in the Dog Owners' Liability Act that prohibit restricted pit bulls and provide for controls on pit bulls.

Speaker, this is generally referred to or commonly referred to as the breed-specific legislation or the ban on pit bulls. Thank you very much.

1520

## JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE JUIF

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to proclaim the month of May Jewish Heritage Month / Projet de loi 17, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine juif.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the co-sponsors of this bill, the member from Parkdale-High Park and the member from Thornhill, for agreeing to co-sponsor the bill.

What this bill would do, if passed: It's a very important time to appreciate and recognize the incredible contributions Ontarians of Jewish heritage have made to the building of this province. It's time to celebrate together their accomplishments, their trials and the great contributions they made to our province and country.

## RESPECT FOR VOTERS ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RESPECT DES ÉLECTEURS

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act to promote respect for voters / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative pour promouvoir le respect des électeurs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker. This private member's bill would ensure MPPs remain accountable to their constituents. MPPs who decide to switch political parties mid-term would remain accountable to their constituents by forcing a by-election before crossing the floor.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Most definitely expresses the power of one.

Thank you.

## MOTIONS

### MEMBER FOR PICKERING- SCARBOROUGH EAST

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I believe there is unanimous consent that the member for Pickering-Scarborough East may speak and vote from her place while seated.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You've heard the motion. Do we agree? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### ANNUAL REPORT, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2010 annual report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES PRÉVENTION DE L'INTIMIDATION

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** A week ago today I stood in this House to speak about the tragic impact bullying can have in our schools and on our communities. I stood in this House with a promise to our Premier, to the members of this House, to every Ontarian to look at what more government can do and should be doing to ensure our schools are safe and inclusive.

I stood in this House as a minister and as a mother with the hope that this Legislature could come together to make it better for students in this province. So today I am so proud to stand here to tell you that we are introducing legislation, the Accepting Schools Act, that, if passed, will make it better for students who are bullied and prevent bullying from happening in the first place.

Aujourd'hui, c'est avec une grande fierté que je me lève pour vous dire que nous présenterons un projet de loi qui, s'il est adopté, améliorera la situation des élèves qui subissent l'intimidation et, en premier lieu, empêchera l'intimidation de se produire.

It is incumbent on each and every one of us—government, teachers, parents, peers, the whole community—to find the pathway forward that allows every student to feel safe, included and welcome in Ontario schools. That's our commitment to Ontario's children and families.

I'm proud to stand here to tell you that the legislation I am introducing today clearly states that we believe that a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment, where all students feel accepted, is a necessary condition for student success; that we understand that students cannot be expected to reach their full potential in an environment where they feel insecure or intimidated; that we



recognize that a whole-school approach is required; and that everyone has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia.

Mr. Speaker, bullying is an underestimated and pervasive problem in our schools and in our communities. The statistics are clear. A 2009 survey of grade 7 to 12 students by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found that almost one in three students has been bullied at school. A 2011 national climate survey by Egale found that 64% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students, and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents, felt unsafe at school.

We know that violence against women and girls remains a serious problem, and we know that discrimination based on race continues to persist. Discrimination based on disability remains as well. We believe that all students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, family status or disability. That's why Ontario is so committed to making our schools safe, inclusive and healthy places for all students.

C'est pourquoi l'Ontario est à un tel point déterminé à faire de nos écoles des lieux sains, inclusifs et sécuritaires pour tous les élèves.

As a result of the important steps that we have already been taking, Ontario is recognized across jurisdictions as leading the way with aggressive safe schools legislation. Ontario's safe schools strategy provides students with the support they need to succeed inside and outside of the classroom.

Since 2004, this government has invested \$285 million in safe schools initiatives that are helping make Ontario schools some of the safest in the world. Ontario was the first province in Canada to require all school staff to report serious student incidents, including bullying, to the principal. Ontario also leads the way in building more inclusive schools, with a requirement that every school board have in place equity and inclusive education policies aimed at supporting all students. But there is more work to do to make our schools safe for every student—safe from homophobic bullying and other types of racist or misogynistic bullying.

Mais il reste du travail à faire pour que tous les élèves se sentent en sécurité dans nos écoles et pour protéger nos écoles de l'intimidation homophobe et d'autres formes d'intimidation fondée sur le racisme ou la misogynie.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I'm standing here today: to ask all members of this House to support the Accepting Schools Act. This legislation is the next step, but there are many more steps ahead.

If passed, the Accepting Schools Act will create legal obligations for boards to address bullying prevention and early intervention, progressive discipline, and equity and inclusive education. The proposed legislation will pro-

vide clear expectations and increase accountability for school boards and bullies, including making expulsion a possible consequence for bullying.

We will give teachers and staff the resources and training they need to intervene early and make those teachable moments matter. We're going to work very closely with experts and with our partners in education to make sure we get it right.

1530

For the first time ever, we are defining bullying in legislation so that every student, every teacher, every principal and every parent knows what we're talking about when we say bullying is not okay in our schools. In addition, the bill will designate the first week of every November to recognize Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in legislation, to encourage and support existing activities in boards and within communities to make clear that bullying must end.

The purpose of this bill is multi-faceted and speaks to all components of this very complex issue. If passed, this legislation will:

- create schools in Ontario that are safe, inclusive and accepting of all students;
- encourage a positive school climate;
- prevent inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia;
- address inappropriate student behaviour and promote early intervention;
- provide support for students who are impacted by the inappropriate behaviour of other students;
- establish disciplinary approaches that promote positive behaviour and use measures that include appropriate consequences and supports for students; and
- provide students with a safe learning environment.

That is our commitment to Ontarians. We want each and every child to feel safe, to feel secure, to feel free to be who they are in our schools every day and in every corner of the province.

That's why the Accepting Schools Act, if passed, will also create a legal obligation for boards and schools to support student activities and organizations that promote gender equity; promote antiracism; promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people with disabilities; and promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name "gay-straight alliance" or another name.

We are unequivocal in our commitment that Ontario schools will be places where all of our students will be supported, where all of our students will be loved for who they are. We want to do our part to end bullying in our schools, but we will not get there alone. We need the whole school community to be involved. We all have a role to play in helping to make our schools safer.

Nous avons tous un rôle à jouer pour rendre nos écoles plus sécuritaires.



We need parents, teachers, principals, community organizations and students to be part of the solution, just like so many are in so many schools across our province.

Mr. Speaker, there are remarkable things going on in our schools, led by passionate teachers, by inclusive and equity-focused students, by principals who care and boards who want the best for the students they serve. The work they are doing every day is making school a safer place for students. This bill, if passed, will give boards, educators and students the support that they need to keep making that difference in their communities and in their schools for all of our students.

We all have a responsibility to take action, and Mr. Speaker, I am proud that our government is accepting that responsibility. We can bring change by taking action and using powerful, positive words.

Monsieur le Président, nous pouvons effectuer un changement en passant à l'action et en utilisant des mots positifs puissants.

This proposed legislation is the action we are taking, but words also matter. We know about the power of words to create fear and pain, to spread hatred, homophobia, sexism and racism. But let's not forget the power of positive words: "I love you." "I believe in you." "I am proud of you." "You can do it." That's why I'm so proud of the words we are saying today to Ontario students. Together, we are going to make every school in every part of our province an accepting school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Statements by ministries?

Response?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise, on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus, to support anti-bullying measures in this Legislature. Specifically, I would like to congratulate the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, a former teacher, an education critic and a former Minister of Education, who has devoted many years of her life to strong advocacy on anti-bullying measures.

In particular, I'd like to thank her for her success in entrenching into law Bullying Awareness Week—my own daughter experienced and participated in anti-bullying week a few weeks ago—and to her I want to say thank you. I'd also like to thank her for the comprehensive legislation she introduced earlier today to prevent bullying in our schools.

Ontario has reached a breaking point with bullying in our schools. Moments ago on my BlackBerry, I read that we're not the only ones. In Quebec, a 15-year-old girl committed suicide today because of the history of bullying she had encountered—it's in the Ottawa Citizen and the National Post.

We know that intense bullying was a factor in preteen and teenage suicides in our own province just recently. And we know some students have opted to change schools or drop out of school altogether because they couldn't face another day looking at their tormenters.

We in this chamber know that bullying has changed an awful lot since we were in school. When cyber bullying came, it brought an entire new generation of Internet users into an experience that none of us had ever seen. Race-based, gender-based, sexuality-based, economic-based, and even red-hair and freckle-face-based bullying came with a new vitriol that none of us seated in this room have ever seen and never hope to see with our own kids.

When it comes to preventing bullying and protecting our children, my heart believes that every MPP in this chamber is on the same page. We have an opportunity to act and to put into law substantive initiatives that will protect school kids. We have a golden opportunity.

We have a minority Parliament. Each member's voice in this chamber is now equal. Together, we can improve legislation and, possibly in the spirit of co-operation, Mr. Speaker, we may actually want to consider something that I don't believe has been done since I have been in this chamber: taking an opposition member's bill and a government bill and merging them together to strengthen the bill.

We can signal to children that hope is before us and a solution is coming, and we have the means to work with others across this chamber to prevent bullying and the harmful effects it's having on our schools.

I just want to caution some members, however, in this new era. We have a serious issue, and it's making headlines. It requires a thoughtful solution, not just an ad hoc one.

I also want to suggest that in this minority Parliament there's going to be lots of opportunity to take political potshots, and we can play partisan games, but not on this issue. This issue is too important. Children's safety, their health, their well-being are too important for all of us to ignore. If there was ever an issue to cast partisanship aside, Mr. Speaker, it is this one.

So I say to the members in the government and to my colleagues in the third party, on behalf of the official opposition, we will be serious about passing anti-bullying legislation, starting, of course, with Mrs. Witmer's legislation and ending, of course, with the government's legislation, because we believe that measures included in both of those bills will make Ontario the leader in North America in anti-bullying legislation.

That is something every single member in this room can do, and we can do it together. Everyone ought to be serious about doing that, because once this legislation is passed, once this legislation becomes law, one child who is hiding under their bed, one child who has decided to take his or her own life or one child who has dropped out of school will be one child too many. It is up to all of us. So on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I offer an olive branch to work together and to support something that we can all get right.

1540

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my honour—indeed it's my privilege—to rise today and discuss this bill. I would say that in this chamber today there is no disagreement about



the scale of the problem before us and the gravity of the problem before us. Bullying is quite literally a life-and-death issue. There are immediate deaths and there is the scarring of personalities that people carry throughout their lives. So it is incumbent on this Legislature, on these members, to take this opportunity now to move forward on this issue.

It's unfortunate that it takes tragic events to move an issue forward into the light of day, into action on this floor. The member for Nepean—Carleton spoke very eloquently recently about a suicide that was bullying related. All of us, I believe, in this chamber were moved by that and will carry that with us into the debate on this bill.

We're at this point of opportunity; we're at a crucial point in the time and the life of the schools in this province. We in the NDP welcome the opportunity to debate this bill, to amend it, to make sure that what comes back to this House is legislation that will, in the end, deal with the issue and make a difference in the lives of children and families across Ontario. Homophobic, racist, gender-based bullying—all bullying—needs to become part of Ontario's past. It has to be cleared out of our future.

The bill before us will provide material for committee hearings in which we will listen to people, listen to their needs and listen to their solutions and—my hope, through amendment—make this bill one that can truly address the issues and the decisions before us.

This bill, as we've gone through it, for the most part seems to codify policies that are already in place. It raises up their importance, puts them into law so they have greater weight. It does not address a lot of new territory, but still, giving greater weight, greater authority: a useful thing.

The bill does raise a number of matters, a number of questions, and those were touched on by the minister very fleetingly in her remarks. Minister, there is no question that words matter. "Gay-straight alliance" is a very powerful term, a very positive term. We in this House need to know that those words and their power will be accessible to students in schools across this province. That step being taken will break a variety of barriers—barriers that need to be broken. We need to know that this reality will be able to speak its name in public in schools throughout this province.

We have to ask, and I expect that the government will bring this forward in the course of debate, how this bill meshes with strategy to address children's mental health issues. There are a variety of routes that lead to that tree of bullying. Children's mental health is one of those routes that has to be addressed, and I'm looking forward to hearing the government talk about how this bill will be integrated with the children's mental health strategy.

We want to hear, and I want the government to address, how teachers, principals and school boards will be given the tools, the training and the support to act on bullying.

All of us know teachers. All of us know the stresses that they deal with, the volume that they deal with and

the intricate personal issues that they must contend with in schools. It's not enough to tell them: Deal with bullying. They need the tools; they need the support.

We also will need to hear from the government on how those issues of poverty, poor housing and other social stresses will be addressed so that the bill becomes more than words on a page but has the force of momentum in society as a whole to deal with those things that cause bullying.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements.

#### ACCESSIBILITY IN THE HOUSE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to point out just something very subtle and a little change for all members, but in particular on the government side. There's a set of steps at the back of the room to accommodate, and I would just bring that to your attention, to make sure that you're not used to walking in a straight line—there's a set of stairs there. I don't want to see any tumbles. I just thought I'd bring that to your attention. Thank you very much.

It's now time for petitions.

#### PETITIONS

##### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** "Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

The names on this petition come from Windermere and Commissioners Road in west London. I will sign this and I will ask the page to have the member from London West sign it as well.

## DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service...; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Sebastian to bring it to the Clerk.

## WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I affix my name, Mr. Speaker.

## TAXATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this 900-name petition coming from the people of Nickel Belt. It reads as follows:

1550

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Christian to send it to the Clerk.

## CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm pleased to table this petition on behalf of my constituents in Ottawa Centre.

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents, as requested in Bill 22, put forward by MPP Kim Craitor.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

I attest to this petition and send it to the table via page Yousef. Thank you.

## WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents, which would include Heather Rutherford, the chair of Clarington Wind Concerns. I want to pay respect to the member from Prince Edward-Hastings, Todd Smith, for the work he's done. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming that industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes" for protection;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in



place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate these findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to submit this petition entitled Temporary Replacement Workers, and I'll read it:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I respectfully submit this petition, will affix my name to it and give it to my good friend Theodore to submit to the Clerk.

### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** On behalf of my constituents in Huron-Bruce, I'm pleased to present the following petition:

"Whereas the 200-foot-high CAW industrial wind turbine being built in the middle of Port Elgin residences and cottages does not comply with the provincial law requiring 550-metre setbacks (to preserve people's health and safety); and

"Whereas it was rejected by the democratically elected municipality and local residents, who were not adequately informed about the project;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately halt construction of the turbine and require it to be moved to a site that does not violate

provincial legislation as passed under the Green Energy Act in 2009. We also petition that area residents be adequately informed about the siting and not surprised by sudden construction of a wind turbine."

I support this petition, and I affix my signature.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I agree with the petition, and I will sign it.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I too have a petition relating to the siting of wind farms. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

### LYME DISEASE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with that petition, affix my signature and send it down with Yousef.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

1600

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

Speaker, I support this petition and affix my name to it and send it down with Andrew.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe—Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Speaker; just under the wire.

"Petition to Restore Medical Laboratory Services in Elmvalle.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

"Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians, including the people of Elmvalle."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and I will sign it. Thank you.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 29, 2011, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'll be sharing my time with my colleague the honourable member from Barrie.

First of all, let me acknowledge for a moment what an honour it is to be here at Queen's Park and thank the people in Prince Edward-Hastings who put their faith in me to be their representative and their voice in the Ontario Legislature. I can assure you that I've already begun to make my voice known.

I'd like to thank our former representative, Leona Dombrowsky, who spent 12 years working to try and make Ontario a better place. I wish the former Minister of Agriculture, Environment, and Education all the best in the next phase of her life.

It took a tireless effort by many people, but I couldn't have made it here without the love, support and dedication of my beautiful wife of 12 years, Tawnya. She's a high school teacher at Moira Secondary School in Belleville, where, by the way, the junior football team, the Moira Trojans, just won the National Capital Bowl for the first time in the school's history. With that win, I won a jug of maple syrup from Leeds-Grenville from our colleague Steve Clark, whose school from Brockville unfortunately came out on the losing end of that game. I'd like to congratulate the coach of that team, too: Todd Crawford. He's from the famous Crawford sporting family from Belleville. Congrats to the entire east-end Belleville school on their historic season.

Tawnya and my two little girls, Payton and Reagan, are the shining lights of my life. Anybody who knows me knows that. As many of you know, it takes a family effort and a community effort to win a seat here in the Legislative Assembly. My wife was there with me on many occasions during the campaign over the summer months. My two little girls saw every single summer fair and festival that you can imagine, from Maynooth to Milford and all points in between, and it cost me a lot of money in rides with the carny shows because the kids were there; they're eight and 11 years old. You can imagine the votes that Tawnya won me with her beautiful smile, so there you go.

Before I talk a little bit more about my family and how they inspired me to seek this office, I'd like to thank the members of my community, who worked extremely hard to help get me here. My campaign manager is Frank Hendry, and he is at the top of my list. He worked tirelessly on my campaign, and he worked tirelessly on many other campaigns over the years. I know that this victory was probably his most satisfying, because we knocked off a 12-year veteran of the Legislature and a three-time cabinet minister, and that's no small feat. In fact, an incumbent member has never lost in the riding of Prince Edward-Hastings, so we broke ground; that's for sure.

I'd also like to thank my co-manager, David Joyce, who has been a friend for many years dating back to the old Belleville Waterfront Festivals of the past. They were a great time in the 1990s. Paul Kyte and his wife, Jennifer, have been tremendous supporters, and Ken and

Janet Hamden have been incredible volunteers and friends. I'm happy to have their youngest daughter, Ashley, now working with me at my constituency office as an assistant in Belleville.

It's amazing how a campaign can bring people together and they become friends as well. A gentleman who recently moved from Monte McNaughton's riding into Belleville was happy to join my campaign. His name is Murray Angus, and he played a very important, vital role in my campaign and getting me elected. I appreciate his efforts. Mitch Heimpel, whom I didn't know until March of this year, worked like a dog over the summer months on my campaign, and he's now working like a dog for me here at Queen's Park. He's working like a dog up in my office right now, pumping out a press release, I'm sure.

Jack Alexander, Mona Tumon-Lyon, Daniella Barsotti, Amy Doyle, Heather Smith, CJ Miller and Twyla Adams pounded the pavement in Belleville with me. Bill Goodman, Gail Fox, Henri Garand, Ian Hanna, Alison Walker, Gerry Mayer and Gerry Mathis minded the Prince Edward county store during the election and hit the streets there. In the north, Gary Kelly, Kim Bishop, Tracy McGibbon and the royal family of Bancroft, Lloyd and Muriel Churchill, helped me out as well. There are a lot of people I could name, and I only have 10 minutes, so I will skip the rest. But I appreciate their efforts and, of course, all my sponsors and donors as well.

I had the support of a few former members of this House as well. A couple of them were able to join me here on November 4: Former Quinte MPP Doug Rollins and a former member for Hastings-Peterborough, Harry Danford, were active members in my campaign, and Gary Fox, a former member from Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings, was there for advice whenever I needed it as well. I thank them, and I know that a couple of them were extremely pleased to come down here for my swearing-in ceremony and meet up with some old friends like the Clerk, Deb Deller.

I'd like to thank the member of Parliament for Prince Edward-Hastings, Daryl Kramp, his wife, Carol Anne, and their family for their guidance and friendship as well.

I congratulate all the members in this 40th Parliament for their successful elections.

I've called Prince Edward-Hastings home for about 20 years now. It's one of the most diverse ridings in the province: from Prince Edward county and its beautiful sand-covered beaches, growing wine industry and thriving arts community, to historic Belleville, with its 1800s vintage city hall, nationally recognized Quinte Ballet School and, of course, the Belleville Bulls of the Ontario Hockey League. We've got the rolling farmland and the cheese factory of Hastings county, and the rocky shorelines and pristine lakes in North Hastings. As a proud Maritimer, I can tell that you that Prince Edward-Hastings is actually bigger than Prince Edward Island, where I spent many a winter playing junior hockey. The



weather is better in Prince Edward–Hastings than it is on Prince Edward Island.

When I moved to Ontario from Riverview, New Brunswick, back in the early 1990s, I did so not to escape the Maritimes—I love the Maritimes; it's a great place to live—but I came to Ontario to pursue a broadcasting career, because Ontario was the land of opportunity. This is where the jobs were, and I had dreams of one day being on TSN, not the Ontario legislative channel. But I'm happy to be here now; that's for sure.

I enrolled at Loyalist College, a great school. It was one of the top media schools in all of Canada and still is to this day. I was at Loyalist College for a few months when I got a job at Quinte Broadcasting, owned and operated by the Morton family for more than 65 years now. I've spent 18 years there, most recently as the news director at that radio station. The late Myles Morton, his wife, Elizabeth, and their children, Bill, Virginia, Steve and Cynthia, provided me with the opportunity to grow as a broadcaster and as a community leader as well as a community volunteer. For 16 years, up until this summer, I woke up at 3:30 in the morning every day to go in and read the morning news. Then I would work all day long, and I would usually call the Belleville Bulls hockey games at night on TV as well. So I will work hard for the residents of Prince Edward–Hastings, because I have for the last 16 years.

I also became involved in numerous charities, like Operation Red Nose. It was great last week that Rick Watt was here from Operation Red Nose Quinte. They drove over 1,600 people home during the holiday season last year, both those parties and their vehicles, during the Christmas season. So it was great to see Rick here. I've volunteered on that now for many years.

1610

My parents, Ray and Sharon, still live in New Brunswick. Although they were a bit sceptical of my decision to jump into politics—they watch a lot of Fox News—they were proud to be here in this building earlier this month for my swearing-in ceremony and I know they'd be proud to be here today as well. The excitement on their faces when the polls and ballots were being counted on October 6 at the historic Belleville Club in downtown Belleville—it was a night that I will never forget. It was great to have my sisters Cheryl and Pam there as well; Cheryl from Nashville and my sister Pam from New Brunswick.

During the election, I heard often about the need for change in the province, especially in rural Ontario, where the wishes of many residents were being ignored. The Green Energy Act stripped municipalities of their decision-making powers and nullified the voice of our rural communities. Unless we're successful in stopping it this week with my private member's bill, there's the chance that the south shore of Prince Edward county will soon have an industrial wind factory on it. The community has made it very clear that it wants no part of this, but it's being forced upon it by a government that won't listen. Residents that have built their dream homes in

Thurlow and throughout the riding are seeing solar panel farms constructed on land that was once a beautiful forest or a meadow, without any say in the process.

Madam Speaker, given that the member for London West managed to work me into his comments this morning during question period, I feel a need to perhaps pay him a similar tribute this afternoon. The member for London West likes to go on about all the jobs that this fairy-tale energy policy is creating. It would simply be nice if the member for London West would get his facts straight. It was 60,000 jobs created last week, 50,000 on Monday, and today it was 20,000. It's not surprising that the government has made the member for London West their representative when they speak for an industry that aims to generate a lot of hot air.

I just presented a petition earlier today on behalf of some residents of London West. I came here happily to be the spokesperson for the people of Prince Edward–Hastings. I didn't know I was going to have to be the spokesperson for the people of London West as well, but I'm happy to do so and present a petition on their behalf.

Over my career as a broadcast journalist, I had the opportunity to spend time with a number of politicians at various levels of government and different political affiliations. I intend to be a politician who listens to his constituents and acts on their behalf. A week ago we sat in the House and listened to a speech from the throne that contained little vision and didn't address the needs of the residents I've spoken with in Prince Edward–Hastings. The government doesn't seem to realize what has just occurred in the previous election. This government, despite being seriously reduced in size, made few, if any, impactful statements in its throne speech. In fact, Dalton McGuinty's speech made little or no mention of the job crisis facing our province.

I have much more to say and hopefully many days and years to say it. I will sit down for now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Barrie.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to address my colleagues in this House. The opportunity to represent the people of Barrie is nothing but a great honour and privilege.

During the early days of putting the Barrie riding association back together again, my skills as a professional mediator were put to the test and utilized to bring a strong team that carried me through my nomination process to where I stand today.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my family, starting with my parents, Bob and Heather Jackson. They grounded me and showed me how to never give up. My brother Greg has always been by my side without any questions. However, perhaps those who have paid the highest price and sacrificed the most for my political adventures are my wife Joanne and my young children, Abbey and Will. I thank them especially for their patience, understanding and support over the past few years and certainly over the past several months. I know it has not been easy for them



I had one of the best campaign teams in the province, led by the matriarch of Simcoe county, as the Speaker would know: Sharon Carson and her daughter Kimberly Carson, a mother and daughter team that was no match for any of our competition. My core team of volunteers included Arif Khan, Sue Christensen, Neil Giesendorf, Paul Dumolin, Sylvia Mayes, Ralph Knapp, and Jackie and Fred Melville, just to name a few who were there since before day one and never let up and helped us knock on close to 50,000 doors and install thousands of lawn signs in Barrie. Thank you, again, to you all.

I come from a family with deep roots in Barrie and our province,

going back to our days as United Empire Loyalists. Currently, I'm raising my young family, the fourth generation, in our community. Civic duty has been strongly instilled in me since childhood, nurturing a rich tradition of community service that I'm proud to maintain and continue through involvement with organizations such as Hospice Simcoe and the Barrie-Huron Rotary Club.

I've also served as a Barrie city councillor, which facilitated a wealth of knowledge and insight that I expect will be fundamental to my role here at Queen's Park. I'm proud to represent the people of Barrie the best way I know how.

As a councillor, I worked hard on championing a safe parks and streets strategy, affordable housing for seniors and people living with disabilities, as well as addressing an issue of critical importance to Barrie: the doctor shortage.

Through my time serving as a councillor I gained the greatest respect for public service. Near the end of my last term, the decision to move into provincial politics was a very natural progression for me that would enable me to further serve my community.

In my younger days, I had the pleasure of working at Queen's Park as a legislative assistant. I often spent time walking the halls of this beautiful building that oozes history from its walls, wondering if I might have the opportunity and the privilege to serve the citizens of Barrie in this very room; and here I stand. Being here now is a goal I've long held, and I fought hard to get here.

I look forward to helping the residents of Barrie establish more jobs, and greater access to higher education and health care that better serve our community. I plan to apply my professional skills as a mediator to bring people together to solve problems, as well as valuable insights gained on the Barrie city council, to best serve the people living in our ever-expanding and beautiful city.

Barrie residents said that they wanted to see change in our job climate. We will work hard for that change. Small business in Barrie is big business. Some 75% of all the people who work in Barrie work for companies that employ four or less employees. We need to encourage those businesses to be the employers that will employ 10 people next year and 20 people the year after that.

I think of Moore Packaging or Barrie Welding, which started out in a garage with two employees and now

employs 200 to 300 people. What a great example of what can be done if we clear the way by reducing regulatory burdens and red tape, and get small business doing what they unequivocally do better than government: create jobs.

Our path to this seat here was guided by our need to do whatever we can to improve Barrie's ranking as the second-worst unemployment rate in the province. Just a few years ago Barrie was one of the most prosperous, fastest-growing communities in the country. It's still growing, but people have to go outside our community to find work more and more. I look forward to working with our federal member and members of our city council to rectify this imbalance, and do it with real jobs that are sustainable and that can stand on their own value and quality of what they do, and will last into the future.

Barrie residents said that they wanted to see change in the delivery of health care. We'll work hard for that change. We'll collaborate with the Royal Victoria Hospital to attract more doctors and health professionals. There are 30,000 people in the city of Barrie who do not have a family physician, and that is entirely unacceptable. It's an example of government not living up to its responsibility to deliver efficient health care to all residents, and this imbalance is exacerbated by the fact that Barrie's status as an underserved area was stripped last year, drying up physician recruitment funds. This is inexcusable.

I look forward to seeing the Liberal plan—should they choose to share it—to fund the operation of our brand new hospital expansion that will employ thousands of people. We don't want to see another grand building with no operating budget to keep beds and surgical suites open. I want to make sure this project remains at the forefront of government priorities.

Barrie residents said that they wanted to see change in the availability of higher education. We will work hard for that change. Barrie is home to one of the best colleges in the country: Georgian College. But our economy and our residents need more. We are one of the largest cities in the country without a university. It's clear that the boost we need to build a stronger economy in Barrie, attract new business and new talent is a university campus.

I was a graduate of Georgian College but had to move away to complete university studies at York University. Even though Barrie has a relatively young population, university participation is up to 10% less than the provincial average and there are significantly less university graduates. No doubt this imbalance will be mitigated with our own university campus, accessible to all residents.

I have been and always will remain a strong advocate for a new university campus in Barrie to serve the needs of businesses and students in central Ontario. I'm pleased that the government has copied our party's promise to work with Barrie to establish a university presence here. Now we need to make sure that we see this promise through. The demand and will are there. Let's get the job done.



1620

Integrity is an important lens. It's the lens that the people of Barrie will view us all through. I vow to be accessible and listen to my constituents. Too often, politicians talk without listening. It doesn't matter much what we say if we don't listen first, does it?

I've outlined my vision for Barrie, my hometown, but in reality my vision needs the vision and the beliefs of my constituents to make it work. The people of Barrie need actions, not words, and they hired me to put words into action and work for them. I intend to do that.

I'm proud of our leader, Tim Hudak, my colleagues in caucus, and I'm proud to work with all of you towards a common good that we were all sent here to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions? Yes, the member for—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Essex.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to start by congratulating my colleagues the two new members from Prince Edward-Hastings and Barrie. Congratulations.

It's wonderful to be sitting amongst some rookies and great to hear their passion about their ridings, their passion about having the honour of sitting in this place, as well as presenting some of the challenges that both of their ridings face. They're not unlike some of the challenges that I believe maybe all of our ridings face: certainly a lack of good-paying jobs; that exodus of young people from our communities; the need for more post-secondary education opportunities; and challenges surrounding health care, something we're certainly all passionate about in this House. I think there's a common theme there surrounding issues that we may find consensus with.

To my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings: I'd like to let him know that I visit his riding each and every February for an annual ice fishing weekend with my cousins and my uncles. About 20 of us go to my aunt's cottage. I've caught the largest pickerel I've ever—pickerel is what we call them, walleye is what they call them in the States. It was 11½ pounds. I'll show you a great picture of it. It's world-class fishing in your riding, and I certainly intend on continuing that tradition.

In the Deseronto area, they also know me almost by first name at the Knights of Columbus there, because that's our first stop as we go over the big bridge and into the Picton area at North Port.

It's a wonderful area. I know how passionate you have to be for the people of that riding, because it is wonderful. It's worth protecting. I know you're bringing about some issues around the Green Energy Act. Certainly, we all have some concerns about that, and I look forward to working with you toward some common resolutions with that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to offer a few comments on the remarks from the members from Prince Edward-Hastings and Barrie.

Speaker, I think I'll begin by first congratulating everybody in the province—or, quite frankly, all over the place, I suppose—since it's the last day of Movember. I know I just talked to the member from—let me just get the riding right here—Renfrew? Is that it? No, there's more to it than that. Just Renfrew?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke; he's going to shave that duster off tonight. He's participated in Movember for the full month, and I congratulate him.

It holds a special place in my heart. This is obviously about men raising money for prostate cancer and the like. I've introduced private members' bills twice here in the Legislature regarding enhanced PSA coverage for men when they go see their doctors. On the PSA test, there is now an ability for enhanced coverage—the doctor can now check a box, whereas before he could not—so that you can get that PSA test actually paid for should the doctor believe that you have a chance, that you might have or if there's a family history. So there's a little bit more discretion for the doctor when it comes to the PSA test for men.

Anyway, I wanted to flag that and congratulate everybody who has taken part in this fundraiser. Maybe Sidney Crosby will shave his, too. His needs a little work.

Many of the speeches in response to the throne speech have talked about the Green Energy Act. Some people then go on to link the green energy industry to the price of electricity in the province of Ontario. I've read a couple of great articles that have appeared in the Thunder Bay paper in the last number of months, and I would assume around the province as well, in terms of how absolutely disingenuous that argument is. The total, at this point—and I think even when it's fully rolled out, the total cost that the green energy industry will have as an impact on your bill—I think it's this Martin Regg Cohn who's now appearing in the papers who has got it pegged at about 0.3% in terms of the total impact on your hydro bill. I just wanted to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you, Speaker. My time is up.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege today to respond to two new members of the Tim Hudak caucus who bring a lot of energy, knowledge and experience to this august place, but the way they got here is also a story in itself.

When I talked to the member from Prince Edward-Hastings, he is a professional broadcaster and, as he said, he was a news anchor. Really, in his role he was watching this place for some time. Some would argue that that's what brought him here. He saw the road that Ontario was on and wanted to make a difference, so I commend him.



In his remarks, he talked about his commitment to his community and his family, which is a pure fit with our caucus members, I can tell you. But he did manage to defeat Leona Dombrowsky, respectfully, who was hard-working. Perhaps she lost a little bit of contact with her riding because she didn't get re-elected. It's a formidable job to take a minister out as well during an election, so it really is quite an achievement.

The member from Barrie, who had worked here at one time as a staff person, a research person, went on to become a councillor in Barrie—highly respected. I did meet him at one time through issues with the expansion, I think, of Barrie—and you were involved in that issue. But he brings that kind of perspective to it as well. You might suggest, too, that he actually—Aileen Carroll was a minister federally, as well as provincially, so no small task to replace a minister, and I think that's part of what you achieved yourself.

When you look at what their themes were, they're trying to make a difference. They were looking at what the people of Ontario were saying, which was that they were looking for change. That's what I heard, the passion in their voice to make a change for families and have some respect for families, and that's basically the message that Tim Hudak has for this place as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I'd like to express my congratulations as well to both the member from Prince Edward–Hastings and the member from Barrie. I know that it's a big struggle, especially when you're new in the field of politics, to win, and it's an amazing accomplishment.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask the member for Durham to—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Sorry, Chair. I'll stand up—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** No. We have a speaker.

Please continue.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** It's a great accomplishment. I applaud your work and your success. I also applaud the fact that you recognize those who brought you here. I think that's a very important theme, that we remember who put us where we are, the people: not only the volunteers, our family and our campaign teams but also the constituents, the residents, the people who we are here to represent. I applaud you in recognizing that and recognizing the people who sent you.

I think it's very important, particularly with the newer members, that we set a new tone. I see it already, particularly with the newer members, that in this House it's our duty to work together. We've been given a mandate, and the mandate is that it is a minority government, and in this minority government it's incumbent upon us to work together to get results for Ontarians.

I see in the new members a spirit of camaraderie and a spirit of co-operation, and this spirit is something that I

think we can all learn from and all emulate in our activities, in the way we express ourselves here in the House. I encourage all the members, the older members as well, to learn from this spirit of co-operation, this spirit of camaraderie. Hopefully, it will inspire you in your activities and the way we communicate in this House, moving forward. I think that's what Ontario and Ontarians want to see, and I hope that's what we can do today and moving forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Prince Edward–Hastings has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you again, Madam Speaker. Thank you as well to the members from Essex, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Durham and Bramalea–Gore–Malton for their remarks. I trust that I can count on the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan for support for my private member's bill tomorrow on restoring powers back to the municipalities, since I know the wind turbine issue is a big issue in his community.

1630

I would like to point out that there are a number of other renewable energy projects out there besides wind and solar. There are a couple of them that have been sitting on a shelf for the last eight years that have been proposed for my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings, and I look forward to bringing them forward and working with the government over the next several months to make these happen.

The new warden of Hastings county, Terry Clemens—he's actually being sworn in tomorrow, and congratulations to Mr. Clemens—is supporting a giant game-changer at the old Marmora mine site. It's a pumped storage project. It's four times the size of Niagara Falls. It would produce 400 megawatts of power and create real jobs in an area that badly needs them. The member from Peterborough has been there. He has seen what an unbelievable project and game-changer this could be for Hastings county and Peterborough as well.

I've also met with representatives of the North Hastings timber industry and the mayor of Bancroft numerous times over the past several months to discuss a tremendous renewable energy opportunity there that has been sitting on a desk for eight years. It's a biomass facility allowing members of the timber industry to dispose of their scrub brush, wood chips and bark to create renewable energy while at the same time creating and sustaining jobs in an industry that really needs a lifeline from this place right now. They're losing jobs; mills are closing. We need to provide them with a new future, and this biomass could be it.

Congratulations to my colleague the honourable member from Barrie on his election. I look forward to working with you over the next several years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'll be sharing my time with my colleague from the riding of Timiskaming–Cochrane, so



I'll be using my 10 minutes and sharing that with my colleague.

Before I begin, I have to take some time to thank those who made this possible, as my colleagues did. It's very important to recognize those who put me here today.

There's family that obviously made great sacrifices to give their time and their love and their support to assist in making this a reality. There are friends who sacrificed many long nights and many long days. There are volunteers—many activists from the unions—who supported the campaign and took a chance in a riding where no one ever thought the NDP would ever win. I have to thank all those volunteers, all those supporters, from the bottom of my heart. There's no other way to say it: Without you, I would not be here. So thank you so much.

I have to particularly thank some members of my campaign team. The campaign manager, Rowena Santos, worked tirelessly. I almost felt like she was the candidate, with the amount of zeal and passion she worked with.

I also have to thank co-manager Pat McCoy for his tireless work. We called him the real McCoy, and we pulled it off.

I also have to thank my good friend, law school classmate and CFO in two elections, both federal and provincial, Gurlal Kler, for his tireless work. He really deserves the credit for a position that is very important, which never has the fame or prestige it should deserve. Thank you to Gurlal Kler.

I have a special thanks that I have to give, and this is to the youth. If anyone followed the campaign, I have to say that my campaign was very unique in that the primary drive, the primary volunteer work base, was youth, and I'm talking on a day-to-day basis. We had 100 youth who would come out on weekdays and 200 youth who would come out on weekends—200 young people. And I mean young people: I'm talking about the ages of 12 to 17. Kids who couldn't even vote came out to the campaign in droves. It was remarkable, it was inspirational and it was unique.

We had a great deal of media coverage on this point, and people asked me, "Why is it that there are so many youth in your campaign? When we talk of times when there is less and less voter participation and voter turnout, why are these youth, who can't even vote, coming out in the hundreds to your campaign?" And I answered, a little coyly, "I have no idea." But in all truth, it was the very same youth who came out in droves who initially encouraged me to run. I had no real political aspirations. I was a criminal defence lawyer with—without sounding too conceited—a rather successful criminal practice, and I was content.

I would work with the community. I had positions where I would work with youth groups who were involved in the peace movement, youth groups who were working on freezing tuition fees, youth groups involved in immigration matters, and I would work with them and provide free legal seminars. I have always believed in the passion and the energy and been inspired by the potential of the youth. It was these very same youth that ap-

proached me, just weeks before the federal election, and said, "We want you to run." I was a little taken aback; I had never considered running in politics. And they were adamant. I don't know if you know young people; they can be very stubborn at times, and very persistent and very persuasive at times.

So it was these young people that sat me down and said, "Listen; we want you to run," and I agreed. I decided to run because they wanted a voice. So what I did, and what I hope I can continue to do, is, I gave them a space so that they could express their voice. If you give youth or if you give anyone a space, you can truly see them flourish.

I'll share one quick story about a volunteer of mine. He was a young volunteer, very shy, and he came to the campaign office and said, "I want to work. I believe in you being the voice of youth, but I don't know what to do. I know there's door-knocking and there's phone-calling, but I'm nervous." I said, "Listen; whatever you feel like," so he said, "Okay, I'll start on the phones."

He started making phone calls. His confidence builds. He said, "Listen; I think I can go out knocking on doors." He knocked on doors, and he actually knocked on the incumbent's door. The wife answered, and he very respectfully said, "Listen, I know that your husband's obviously the incumbent and running, but I think that Jagmeet Singh is a great candidate and you should support him." It took a lot of guts, and it showed this young man's potential. A young man who was too shy to even speak on the phone was able to knock on the door of an incumbent and persuade them, or try to persuade them, to secure a vote. It shows that young people really have a lot of potential; they just need a space to have that potential flourish and grow.

So I want to particularly thank the youth, the young people, who encouraged me to run. I will be your voice, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your support and your encouragement.

I represent Bramalea–Gore–Malton. Actually, before I talk about the riding, I'd also like to take the time to thank my predecessor. Dr. Kuldeep Kular, my friends from across the aisle will know, was a representative for two terms, represented Bramalea–Gore–Malton to the best of his abilities, and I respect the fact that he fulfilled his duties and was a parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of Health for a number of years as well. I thank him for his work in the community and thank him for his work in the riding.

Bramalea–Gore–Malton is a very diverse riding, particularly with a very unique background, a wide diversity of cultures, religions, a large South Asian population, and some of the best Indian food, Punjabi food, you'll ever find. Come out to Bramalea–Gore–Malton and we'll dine you to your heart's content.

It's an area which has a lot of issues as well. Despite being a very vibrant, hard-working community of diverse background, there are a number of issues that plague the area. There is a lot of hope. The community is hard-working, there's unity despite the diversity, but there are



some issues that the community faces, and I'd like to highlight some of them. I think it is my duty to highlight these issues and address them moving forward.

We all know that times are difficult. It's becoming harder and harder to make ends meet for a lot of families. In Bramalea-Gore-Malton, what compounds this issue, what makes this issue even harder, is the fact that auto insurance is the highest not only in the province but the highest in the entire country. Auto insurance in Brampton is the highest in the country. Simply for residing in Brampton, simply for having that postal code, regardless of your driving record, regardless of your tickets and accident claims, the highest insurance rates are paid by people in Brampton. It's simply unfair, and something needs to be done.

The other issue that people in Bramalea-Gore-Malton express and I'm committed to working on during these difficult times: Employment is a big issue, but in Bramalea-Gore-Malton, it's particularly the issue of temporary job agencies. The issue is that when times are tough, precarious work makes those times even more difficult.

1640

What we see in Bramalea-Gore-Malton is many people—we don't fault job agencies for finding someone work or maybe taking a fee for finding that work, but we do fault job agencies for, year after year, never transitioning individuals into full-time work, not providing any benefits and not providing any security of employment. For year after year, the same employee works in the same factory at the same position but never gets a full-time job, and half of his or her wages are taken away by the company. That's shameful. That's unacceptable. That's something I'd like to work to change.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you. And I ask all my colleagues in this House to work together to make that change, because people deserve to have full-time good-paying jobs.

The final issue that I'd like to address is health care. Health care, we all know, is a big issue that faces all Ontarians. It's a concern that's across the board.

In Brampton, a city which is fast approaching 500,000 in population—in a city of that size, there is only one hospital servicing that entire region. I know cities. I grew up in Windsor, where the population is approaching 200,000, in and around that, where there are two full-time hospitals and a third facility which provides some medical care as well. In a city of 500,000, one hospital is simply not enough. The residents of Bramalea-Gore-Malton and particularly Brampton deserve and demand at least two hospitals, and that's something I think we should work to implement.

There has been promise after promise that's been broken with respect to the Peel Memorial hospital. At first, there was a promise not to close it, then there was a promise to rebuild it. Now, their promise is that it will be destroyed and rebuilt. Something has to be done. The

citizens of Brampton deserve two hospitals at a minimum.

There has also been a promise to implement a community health centre, which is a great initiative, and I applaud that initiative. But the problem is that it's a promise. If that promise is not fulfilled, then it will leave the people again disillusioned with their government.

So I urge the government and I urge all my colleagues here today: Let's make sure we fulfill our promises. That's what we've been sent here to do. Thank you so much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Timiskaming-Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Speaker, it's a great honour to be able to rise in this House and speak on behalf of the good people of Timiskaming-Cochrane. They have bestowed that responsibility on me, and I intend to treat it with the greatest respect.

I would like to thank, first and foremost, the person who is mostly responsible not only for our electoral success, but for all the great things that have happened in my adult life: my wife and partner, Ria, the mother of our four children, and right now the main operator of our dairy farm. Our children Steph, Alex, Dana and Vicky are the lights of our lives, and Oma is the glue that holds it all together.

Although it's my name on the office door, we all know that elections are not won by one person or even by a big family effort, but by a group of people, a team, and we had a great one. There are too many to name. For every post that was pounded, leaflet that was dropped and call that was made and countless other tasks that were completed, I would like to thank them all from the bottom of my heart. They know who they are. We shared laughter and tears, and it's been an honour to work with them.

The great riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane has been represented by David Ramsay for longer than I have been able to vote. Having worked with him on some issues, against him on others, and having run against him in an election campaign, I know that he was a strong representative for our area and I wish him well.

There is a current member of this House who has had a great impact on my political life: the member for Oxford, known around our home as Uncle Ernie, my mother's brother. I have enjoyed many discussions, political and otherwise, with him. Although we often disagree, I have a great respect for his political and personal convictions.

I have served 12 years on township councils, four years on the board of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and four years on the board of Englehart hospital, but I learned about politics as president of the Temiskaming Federation of Agriculture at the time when the city of Toronto and the government of Ontario decided that an open pit mine at the head of our watershed would be the ideal place for Toronto's garbage. I was involved in the Adams mine battle for more than a decade.



Our fight to protect our watershed peaked when, as the president of the federation of agriculture, I sent a letter to Premier Eves stating that we had proof that the evidence on which the MOE had approved the site was inadequate. I was promptly sued by the proponent. The critical analysis of the approval that the federation of agriculture commissioned was released, and the political process that created the Adams Mine Lake Act was begun. The lawsuit against me was dropped shortly before the writ was dropped in the 2007 election, the election in which we came within 600 votes of defeating Minister Ramsay.

It was in the Adams mine years that I met folks like Charlie Angus, Gilles Bisson and Jack Layton. I decided that if I ever ran for a partisan office I would run alongside people like those, who took a chance and believed in me. Here I am, happy to be serving alongside Mr. Bisson and our leader, Andrea Horwath.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** And us, too.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** And all the other NDP.

There are 34 municipalities in my riding, each one unique in its own way. Here's a six-stop tour to understand the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane. Although my riding is five hours away, the first stop is right here in Queen's Park: a display case by the west door that contains a vein of silver from the Keeley mine. The description on the case could describe what has happened in my riding and a lot of the north. Riches are discovered, be they gold, silver or chromite; a boom develops; wealth is created; the vast majority of it leaves the area; the boom collapses, and we, the permanent residents, are left to deal with the aftermath as best we can. Fortunately, we are right now in a boom time. Mines are being opened, communities are reawakening, and the companies can't find enough employees in my riding. When I knocked on doors four years ago, these same communities were struggling with no hope in sight, and according to my Liberal opponents at the time, resource extraction was a sunset industry. Now the only mention of the north in the throne speech is the Ring of Fire—sunset indeed.

The second stop is the miners' memorial in Kirkland Lake. Not only is mining boom and bust but it is hard, dangerous work, and this captivating structure salutes those who have given their lives extracting wealth from the Shield, the wealth on which much of this province was built, the wealth that is once again flowing from Kirkland Lake Gold and soon will be flowing from Aurico in Matachewan and Detour Lake outside of Cochrane.

The third must-see in my riding is a massive log crane that dominates the skyline of the town of Iroquois Falls. Its purpose for decades has been to transfer logs into the Abitibi paper plant. It is a good representative of our forestry sector. The crane will soon cease to operate, since the plant is switching to wood chips, while the logs leave to be processed outside the province, where electrical costs are lower.

The fourth stop is Temagami, a region known worldwide for its natural beauty. Its namesake lake is certainly one of the most beautiful in the province, and it repre-

sents a landscape that supports a large tourism sector. To us, Temagami also represents a more sombre period in our history. The Temagami land claim has taught us all that we have to respect each other's claim to the land on which we all depend. Temagami was the beginning of the continuing tug of war between the rights of those who have lived here for generations and those who live in other places but think they know better.

The fifth stop on the tour is a whistle stop. The Ontario Northland Railway cuts through my riding and is responsible for much of its development. It was Ontario's development road, and it could resume that role again in the future. My constituents remain shocked that the Metrolinx contract was not awarded to the ONR, and it puts into question the government's true commitment to diversification in the north.

The sixth stop is near and dear to my heart. It is the view that you see when you crest the hill that overlooks the Little Clay Belt. After travelling through several hours of Canadian Shield, the valley opens up to 200,000 acres of beautiful Ontario farmland and an equal amount in Quebec: home to modern agricultural dealerships, grain elevators and, of course, Thornloe Cheese. My riding also has great agricultural areas around Sturgeon Falls, Matheson and Cochrane.

#### 1650

The people of my riding—anglophone, francophone, First Nation and others—share a common bond: We love our area and are proud Ontarians. The fact that our economy has always been boom and bust poses some unique challenges. In good times, people come, youth stay; but in bad times, the youth leave and the remaining population is largely senior—seniors who can't afford to renovate their houses to take advantage of a tax credit, seniors who are more worried about paying the next month's heating bill and the HST that has been tacked on it. Even when boom times return, their position sometimes becomes more perilous when living costs skyrocket but their income is stagnant.

The provincial government doesn't create mining booms, although they like to take credit, nor can they avoid conditions that cause collapses, like what we have seen in forestry, but they can take steps to take full advantage of the boom or mitigate the bust.

The Ring of Fire is an incredible opportunity. Hopefully we can learn from our past mistakes and realize the full potential of this development for all Ontarians.

It's an honour to be able to speak on behalf of my constituents and work on their behalf. I'd like to thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you, Madam Speaker—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** The minister of everything.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I get more heckling on my own side. Thank you, to the opposition, for being kind to me.



I want to commend the folks, because one of the things that I'm hearing is not a passion just for the constituencies that people are representing—and I want to commend the members who have spoken—but also a passion for Ontario. I think we sometimes have to see past stereotypes in this place and get to know each other.

My passions in this province, even though I represent the most urban downtown seat in the largest city in Canada, even though my political history has taken me to two other provinces—my fondest childhood memories were in my friend from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell's riding. I spent my summers learning how to milk cows as a city kid in Montreal when my father nearly ruined his marriage when he bought half a bull for artificial insemination—if I can use that word in the House—which turned into an entire dairy farm, which became my and my sister's major summer preoccupation.

My other fond memories are—I'm very proud, because most of my family lives in Sudbury, and that's where I spent a lot of my life, with my aunts. But there are tragedies that we're all aware of. None of my uncles made it over 52 because they all died of respiratory illness as a result of their work. My aunt, who just turned 92, lives in Sudbury in Wanup—and I should say a shout out to my Aunt Anne and a happy birthday. She was a widow, a union maid, who led all of the widows all the way to the Supreme Court to get pensions for women who were miners. She was a rather extraordinary woman who is one of my role models. So I hope we take this time.

Natural gas prices have crashed. They're half what they were. We need to have a very candid conversation about things like sales taxes and the choices that we make before we bring bills forward. So I'd like to say to those members that I would like to hear some of the things that you have said in opposition, and be listening to them, because I think that was the message. I hope I have some time to hear—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** First, I'd like to congratulate my colleagues in the third party for their first-time election. I'm a first-time member of the House, and it's quite a thrill. We do share so many things with our party and our ideas.

One of the things I liked to hear from the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton was working together. I think that's very important. We have to do that because people are asking us to do that, and that's something that we have to work towards.

To the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, I come from a small town, and certainly you don't. Monkton, where I come from, we don't use signal lights there because people know where you're going anyway, so we don't do that. In fact, we know when strangers come to Monkton because they're the only ones that do use the signal lights. That's where I come from. But I've been to your riding many times in my past, and it is a diverse community.

To the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane: I, too, will be working with uncle Ernie, the member from Oxford. We share similar interests. I was raised on a dairy farm for part of my life. We don't own that farm right now, but it's part of my history. I still live in the country. I'm four kilometres off a main road, so when I come to the Legislature, Speaker, I always bring part of my riding with me, and it reminds me who I represent.

Anyway, congratulations to both of you. I look forward to working with you in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions? The member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's really a pleasure and an honour to officially welcome my two colleagues from Bramalea–Gore–Malton—a historic win for our party—and from Timiskaming–Cochrane. It is so wonderful to have someone who is as passionate about agriculture as I am, being from the riding of Essex.

I'm learning about my two colleagues here as much as you are. I didn't know that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane had family in the House, which is interesting. So, welcome to the family, I guess; this is wonderful.

I just want to point to some of the things that they mentioned—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** When he gets older and wiser, he's going to be a Conservative.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Maybe if he becomes senile he may—

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** We're glad to have these two members as it is. They bring a lot to the table: a passionate advocate for agriculture, and a criminal defence lawyer, a young person.

I think the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton hit on something that we should all really pay attention to. He attracted a large amount of youth to his campaign. As a subtle reference to his success—being humble, as I know, my good friend is, you mentioned that you weren't sure why they came to you, but it's because you believed in them and they, in turn, believed in you. I think that's a message that this government should pay credence to. We should be believing in our youth in this province. We should be investing in them. We should be hearing their concerns around post-secondary education and job opportunities. They have the message.

I'm just so thrilled to have these two members as colleagues, and I know that we're going to work very well together.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions? The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Certainly it's a pleasure to rise and make a few comments on the speeches by two of our new colleagues.

To the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, congratulations. However, on this side of the House we were a little dismayed. The physician caucus here was reduced



from four members on this side of the House to three, since you were the winner in your contest in your riding. However, what I heard from you were some very positive comments about your predecessor, and for that I certainly thank you. I heard from your remarks that you had some very positive interests in community health centres and other issues that are important to you and, of course, to your constituents whom you represent.

To the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane: Many of us had the pleasure to go up to your riding for the International Plowing Match a couple of years ago. Truly, for me, it was the farthest north I had ever been in Ontario. It was a pleasure to be there, and to hear a little bit about your background and your dedication to your community.

What I'd like to say in general is that it's clear that we do have many issues in common in this House, apart from the passion for our individual ridings but also for the issues that matter most to our constituents. I certainly hope, going forward, that this will be expressed in coming together in this House to support legislation and, obviously, to listen to each other. This is certainly something I heard from my constituents. After the election results were broadly known, what I heard over and over was, "Make this government work. We've had enough elections. You people get your act together."

I look forward to working, certainly from what I heard from—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Response?

1700

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much. I'd like to thank all of my colleagues. I thank the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, the member from Perth–Wellington, my colleague the member from Essex and also the member from Oak Ridges–Markham. Thank you so much for your responses. I appreciate the kind words.

Hearing a little bit about my colleague's experiences—being born in Moncton—I should share: I have a very interesting background in terms of my history in Ontario. I was born in Scarborough. When I was about a year old, I was shipped out to Punjab, India. I was there for about a year and I came back. My father was accepted to Memorial University, so I lived in St. John's, Newfoundland for a bit. So any fellow Newfoundlanders, I've experienced the beauty of Newfoundland and the stark winters and brief but beautiful summers. Then I grew up in Windsor; most of my childhood was in Windsor. So I can relate to my colleague from Essex, and my colleague here from Windsor West. I think we have a lot more in common than we have different. Sometimes we may get caught up in our differences, but when it really comes down to it, no one is here for any other purpose but to make Ontario better and to do their best job representing their constituents.

Actually, a colleague from the Conservative Party said to me, "You know, some people think that we're scary because we're Conservatives." I was about to agree but

he said, "Listen, I'm here for the same purpose as you. I want to do the best job possible for my constituents." I believe him and I believe we're all here for that same purpose, so let's get the job done. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further debate? The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will be sharing my time with the colleague the member for Willowdale.

In this response to the speech from the throne, I think we need to look particularly closely at what this document is all about. It is all about moving Ontario forward. It is a plan for jobs and the economy. I find it a particularly balanced and prudent approach. It details the turmoil in our economy in terms of the global situation and the impact that that global situation has on us here in Ontario, so that even though with good management over the last several years, with our strong financial institutions, clearly, the population in Ontario is undergoing considerable anxiety about the future. What we have here is a serious plan for the serious times that we're living in. It really does focus on Ontario's strengths and seeks to expand those strengths and, in the process, in fact create jobs.

What's more important to me is perhaps that it reflects very closely what I heard during this recent election campaign. Many of us like to talk about our ridings, and I certainly am one of those. I have one of the most diverse and, I would say, most exciting ridings in the province of Ontario. It is comprised of well over 200,000 people. There were some 166,000 electors or voters in the last election in Oak Ridges–Markham. Across the north part of the riding, it is rural: the Oak Ridges moraine, the headwaters of the rivers that flow down into Lake Ontario and, in fact, down towards Lake Simcoe—a beautiful, very green and pleasant place. In the south end, Markham, Richmond Hill and now even Whitchurch–Stouffville are growing dramatically.

When I was knocking on all those doors in the urban areas, I was fascinated by who came to the door and what their concerns were. In many cases, I will simply say they were newer Canadians. They were people, very often, who had lived in this country for something between 15 years and the present time. Many times I found in fact that there were three generations living under that roof.

The concerns at the door were the ones that I see we have responded to so well in this throne speech. Their concern, as with many new Canadians, was that their children have the very best opportunity to have a happy, successful, productive life, and they were very clear that in order to achieve that, they would need the very best public education system.

They were prepared to acknowledge that our government has, in fact, made many, many strides when it comes to what we've done in education. Of course, the rollout of full-day kindergarten was incredibly popular. I found that people were somewhat dismayed that their



school still didn't have the opportunity for their kids to start at age four, but they were looking forward to it.

They were very concerned about the future. There are certainly many people in my riding who are finding that post-secondary education is a burden—middle-class families wondering how they might be able to afford to have their kids obtain that post-secondary education—but they also were incredibly aware of how important it was for them to do that. They knew that this is where the knowledge economy is headed, that skilled jobs were what their kids would be fighting for, and that they needed the very best preparation. So our proposal—our commitment—to reduce post-secondary tuition by 30% was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm, and we have made that commitment in this throne speech.

Many of us met with our local colleges yesterday. My riding is home to the King campus of Seneca College.

**Interjection:** That's a great college.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It's a fabulous college—a beautiful setting, actually, right on the Oak Ridges moraine.

Our government has already made a commitment to some massive expansion on that campus—\$43 million—an additional 1,450 student spaces at that college. Certainly, officials from Seneca yesterday wanted to impress on me if there was any way our government, with its infrastructure plans, some \$35 billion over the next three years—they wanted to be in line for that expansion at the earliest possible opportunity.

When I knocked on the door and I found a grandparent opening the door, perhaps at home babysitting younger children, it struck me very forcibly how important it was to keep those seniors in their homes for as long as possible. Again, we've been spending the last couple of days discussing the healthy home renovation tax credit for seniors. I know this is going to be incredibly popular. In many families, there's a major stigma in their loved ones—their seniors—going into long-term-care facilities. They are very, very desperate to keep their grandparents in the home for as long as possible, and this kind of home renovation tax credit will assist families in doing that.

Of course, the other aspect of that particular initiative is the opportunity to increase jobs. As I was walking around Markham and Richmond Hill, I met many, many tradesmen, and they were particularly pleased with any opportunity that would stimulate the home renovation business.

Another aspect that is very important to my community is GO train service. GO buses, but also GO trains, are incredibly vital to all the commuter traffic. I actually have five GO train stations in my riding. There is a commitment from the Ministry of Transportation for a sixth, with the extension of the Richmond Hill line. The idea of two-way, all-day, seven-day-a-week GO train transit was something that people were just ecstatic about.

Having looked at our plans, we know, given the ridership, certainly at the Markham and the Mount Joy GO train stations, that we have achieved the ridership that

will make this a viable and economic prospect for GO and for Metrolinx.

**1710**

It's not all just about what we're intending to do. The throne speech is building, in fact, on what we have spent the last eight years doing, and that is rebuilding our public infrastructure. In my riding, which is growing so rapidly, it is not just all about transit. It is obviously about roads; we have repaired bridges, we have repaved. That is not only obviously improving the quality of life of our residents with these improvements, but it is creating jobs.

Now, in the statement made by the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton, he also mentioned that he had so many young people involved in his campaign. I was extremely fortunate. My volunteers started at about grade 8 and I had many high school students. What I was so pleased to see was in fact their sense of optimism for the future. They understood, many of these young people, that Ontario was a great place to live in. They knew that they were getting a wonderful education. What I think was even more important was that they wanted to get involved in the political process at a very young age. So when we do bemoan the fact that perhaps the voter turnout was not as high as we wished, I was so pleased to see such enthusiasm from younger people who I know are going to reenergize our political system. Whether they be supportive of the third party in Bramalea or solid Liberals in Oak Ridges-Markham, this all bodes well for the future.

So, Madam Speaker, I would simply like to say that I find this a blueprint for our way forward that is going to meet the needs of my residents in many different ways. It is a very prudent plan. We know we have to be very cautious about expenditures, but we also need to build a better Ontario. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand and speak on the throne speech. I've been reflecting on the throne speech since it was delivered, and it seems to me that the two big challenges that the throne speech raises are both the challenge about what we're going to do about the economy, the economic situation that Ontario finds itself in—through no fault of its own, I might add. It is a combination of the situation on the world scene; it's a combination of the situation in the United States, our major trading partner. In fact, our own institutions are in really quite fine shape, but we live in a world where we find ourselves dependent on our export markets.

The other challenge is the challenge of confronting these issues in the context of a minority Legislature, and that presents its own challenges.

First, let me say a word or two about the context of the economic situation that we find ourselves in. Ontario's economy is essentially a manufacturing economy. Other parts of Canada—in the west, they have fisheries and wheat, potash in Saskatchewan, forestry products in BC;



on the east coast, they have fisheries and oil and gas; Quebec has minerals. But Ontario is a manufacturing economy. We export 85% of what we manufacture in Ontario and the vast bulk of that 85% goes to the United States.

In addition to that, there has been a significant drop in revenues because of the worldwide economic downturn. So we find ourselves with about 25% fewer revenue tax dollars coming in, which has created the deficit of something in the order of \$16 billion.

The challenge for this Legislature is to manage our affairs and to manage our economy in such a way that we can reenergize our manufacturing system so we can build up our exports and we can export to the United States, Europe and other economies.

There has to be a plan to do that. The plan that we have come up with—the broad strokes have been set out in speech from the throne, some further details following a day later in the economic update, and the real, real detail will be in the budget speech coming in the new year.

But suffice it to say that one of the principal things that we've done is the HST, which is designed to aid the manufacturing economy. That's why the federal Conservative Party supports the HST. That's why Jim Flaherty, the Minister of Finance and a former Ontario Minister of Finance, supports the HST; in fact, has initiated it. That's why all of the economists and all of the businesses, large and small, are keen and very supportive of the HST. They know that it is going to help to revive our manufacturing economy. If that happens, if our manufacturing economy gets on its legs, that means jobs, that means people are paying taxes, that means companies are paying taxes; that means we've got all of the tools and the revenues that we can spend on health care, education, infrastructure and the other things that we want to do. That's the economic challenge.

The other part of the challenge is, how do we meet that economic challenge, how do we get legislation through, how do we get initiatives through in the context of a minority Legislature?

The people of Ontario have sent 54 opposition seats and 53 Liberal seats. I think that's a statement from the people of Ontario that they want all three parties to get together in a non-partisan way and tackle these problems. That's the other challenge. How do we meet that challenge? That means that there has to be some goodwill on the part of all parties, opposition and government parties, to meet these challenges to revive our economy.

The best way we can do that is to adopt a truly bipartisan approach. We may have some differences in the details of how to execute that approach, but I think that all parliamentarians, all legislators in this House, in this body, have got the best interest of Ontario at heart. While we may have some differences of emphasis and some difference on the details of what we want to do, it behooves us, because that's what the people of Ontario have told us. They've sent us to this Legislature—we're about equally divided here—and they've said, "Work

together. Work together to revive Ontario's manufacturing economy."

We've taken it a step further in that we've reached outside of this Legislature and have asked an independent economist—a distinguished economist, the former chief economist for the Toronto-Dominion Bank, a former senior federal official in the Department of Finance in Ottawa, a man of great experience and great integrity—to give us an outside view of what we can do to reform the way we deliver public services in Ontario; that is, health care, education, infrastructure and the like.

I think the political parties in this chamber, the Conservatives, the NDP and the Liberals, working together, along with the assistance, the advice and the consultation of an outside commission, the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Service, as chaired by the economist Don Drummond, will put some ideas, put some suggestions and put some initiatives on the table to reform the way we deliver public services.

I think it's incumbent, again, on all members of this chamber, be they Liberal, be they Conservative, be they NDP, to perhaps take that report as a common starting point, sit down and say, "How can we implement some of the ideas that we expect will be in that report? How can we merge those or make those compatible with some thoughts that we have on the Liberal side, some thoughts that we have on the Conservative side and some thoughts that we have on the NDP side?" I think that's what the people of Ontario are telling us.

1720

After the throne speech and after the economic update, I can tell you that the tone of the telephone calls and the meetings I had in my constituency office in Willowdale told me this: "David, we recognize we're in very difficult times in Ontario. We recognize that somehow we have to rebuild our manufacturing economy. You've got a minority Parliament, you've got the Don Drummond report coming out. Please"—they implore me—"please work with all members of the chamber, work with the Don Drummond report when it comes out and do your very best to restructure and get our manufacturing economy back on track."

In essence what the people in Willowdale were telling me is: "We expect a different tenor in the chamber. We expect more bipartisanship. We expect less ideological fervour from all parties." That's what my constituents in Willowdale are telling me. That's what they are expecting of me.

I dare say that when the next election rolls around in a number of years—2015 or whenever—that they're going to look back and they're going to say to me as the MPP from Willowdale, "In a minority government, did you bring good judgment, balanced judgment, a sense of fair play to the other parties, a sense of fair play to outside advice, a sense of bipartisanship to do what we sent you, as a Liberal, and what we sent members of the other political parties—the NDP and the Conservatives—to this Legislature to do?"



I think it is a real call for constructive, collaborative and bipartisan negotiations, and a relationship to rebuild the economy. That's what the people of Ontario want us to do. That's what they expect.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I listened to the member from Willowdale talk for the last five minutes about co-operation and how it's necessary for the members of this House to co-operate. We hear those words a lot from the Premier. Maybe the member for Willowdale should tell the Premier what he's hearing, because what we're hearing from Dalton McGuinty is anything but. He talks about co-operating, but he refused to accept one recommendation from either ourselves or the New Democrats when it came to the throne speech. He says, "You know what? We want to co-operate, but my definition of co-operation is, you do it my way or we're not interested in talking about it." That's the Liberal way, Madam Speaker, and unfortunately that's exactly what the public is upset about.

We just had an excellent bill last week from the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, Mr. Mantha, that would have given people across this province some relief from home heating bills by removing the HST. "No can do," say the Liberals, "because that's not what we want."

So co-operation doesn't mean the three parties here working together, according to the Liberals. What it means is us just bowing down to them and agreeing that they are the masters. Well, that's not going to happen. That's not what the people in Ontario said on October 6. They voted in a minority government.

They didn't win a minority government; they lost their majority. That should be a message to them, and they should shed some of the arrogance they had in the last Parliament. But I can see that that's not going to happen.

One of the problems with this government is that they don't understand how to manage money. We hear from them, "Oh, that's a spend issue, that's a cost-cutting issue." There was \$68 billion in spending when this party took over; \$124 billion now. Learn how to manage money. Assess your priorities. That's what needs to be done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I just want to respond to the two likeable Liberals, one from Oak Ridges-Markham and the other from Willowdale. There's so much to say nice things about, but there's so much to disagree on as well. Particularly to the member from Willowdale: He talked about the idea that we need to have a truly bipartisan approach, and then he said that people in his riding expect a different tone. And it's all true. But, you can't overlook the touch of irony and humour in his remarks, because as the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke said today and I have said for the last two days, you lost that opportunity but the other day, last week. Because, if you're truly talking about a bipartisan approach, when the other parties agree on

something, surely you expect the other party, the only remaining party, to say, "Hmm, maybe there's something there; if they agree, and some of our own folks agree, maybe we should, in the spirit of co-operation and bipartisanship," which the member from Willowdale just expressed—"maybe we might just have to say, 'Hmm, we don't agree with them,' but why don't we just say, 'Let's do it'? Let's do it because there's a different spirit of co-operation going on."

The Minister of Colleges and Universities is shaking his head. I don't get it. You can't say on the one hand, "We've got to work together," and on the other hand deny what the other two parties are saying. You just can't do it.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Why is it that you can stand up and say, "We have to have a bipartisan House here," when it suits you, but when it doesn't suit you, you say, "Well, we just can't, because we disagree"? Do you understand the irony in that? Because I'm crying out with laughter every time you do that. You've got to shape up here—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments? The member for Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Well, thank you—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order. We have a speaker. The member for Peterborough, you have—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Madam Speaker, could I get my two minutes back?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Well, it's interesting. I did listen very—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to just wish you my sincerest congratulations at being back in the chair. You always do a great job.

Let me say, I listened very carefully to my colleagues the members from Oak Ridges-Markham and Willowdale, and one of the things they touched upon was the Drummond review. I think Don Drummond is needed back in Ottawa, because I read this story this morning in the National Post; I don't usually read the National Post, but it says, "Huge Growth in Public Servants under Tories." It says here: "However, the number of public servants has soared over the past decade ... especially during the ... six years the Harper government has been in office."

"Between the end of "Program Review" and 2010, the federal public service population increased by 39 per cent and is now 13 per cent larger than what it was two decades ago," according to a briefing that was made to the gazebo man from Huntsville, the Honourable Tony Clement. So we have—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: This debate has nothing to do with the provin-

cial House. All they're talking about is the federal House. This member is out of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask the member to confine his remarks to the debate here.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I will, Madam Speaker, and I apologize. I got a little carried away, but they did mention Mr. Drummond, who is the former Deputy Minister of Finance in Ottawa.

But let me say that the two members from Willowdale and Oak Ridges–Markham talked about the throne speech. They talked about our need to show some restraint as we move forward. They talked about our seniors' population that will be able to take advantage of the 15% tax credit, whether it is the seniors themselves or people that want to modify their homes for their mom or their dad—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know what? Listening to the member from Willowdale just reminds me of that powerful Liberal word once again: befuddlement. The member was reflecting on the throne speech and this terrible situation we're in that, of course, they had no control over—just completely beyond their control. But, Madam Speaker, what are the first two bills that this Liberal government brings into the House after recognizing the terrible and dire economic situation we're in? They bring in a bill to have \$80 million in new spending with the southwest Ontario development fund and the eastern Ontario development fund.

1730

Another bill that they bring in is the home renovation tax credit. And we don't even know how much that's going to cost us. We have no idea what the uptake will be.

So here we have a dire economic situation, and the member from Willowdale is reflecting and scratching his head about how they're going to fix it. Well, they're going to spend more money.

Listen, Madam Speaker, I have to read this from the National Post, from George Jonas: "What happened to the once prosperous province of Ontario, now a quarter of a trillion dollars in debt? In a word, government—and not just any government, but eight years of an interventionist, social-engineering kind of government; one that last week, having been insufficiently chastised by the voters, delivered itself of a throne speech, essentially promising more of the same." More spending, more spending, more intervention, and the member from Willowdale is going to reflect about, how did this happen, how could this possibly—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

The member from Oak Ridges has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'd like to thank my colleagues from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Trinity–Spadina,

Peterborough, and Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for their comments—in some cases, perhaps, a little bombastic and extreme.

However, I would simply like to reiterate our conviction on this side of the House as we move forward that we have presented a balanced and very prudent response to the economic situation we find ourselves in.

We are building for the future. We're going to guard the health care and education systems that we have in this province, that our constituents rely upon and have told us that they want preserved and protected. In order to do that, clearly, we have to look at all opportunities for efficiencies and for cost savings.

I would simply say that a number of comments have been—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you, Madam Chair—have alluded to the fact that a private member's bill presented by the member for Algoma–Manitoulin was voted against by this side of the House.

I think that our determination on moving forward is dependent on fiscal prudence. In fact, it appears to me that we have adopted a far more fiscally conservative approach than the official opposition in the way we wish to move forward. We have made very careful commitments in terms of investments in the future, but we are very mindful of the very difficult economic situation that we find ourselves in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate? The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and congratulations on your appointment as deputy Speaker in the Legislature. It's nice to see you in the chair again.

I'm pleased to join in the debate this afternoon on this throne speech. There has been some cantankerous behaviour between the two, Madam Speaker, but I'm sure you'll get them all settled down. I won't stir up anybody; I'm sure not.

I'd like to start off by thanking the voters of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for the honour they bestowed upon me by returning me to the Legislature here at Queen's Park, and for the trust and confidence they've shown in me. I certainly will work very hard on their behalf. I appreciate that opportunity again.

I'd like just to extend my sincere thanks to the many volunteers who worked tirelessly over those long—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I would ask the member for Peterborough to come to order.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** And we start it again.

Anyway, during the last campaign voters across the province certainly sent a strong and a clear message to us. They were no longer satisfied with the status quo, especially rural Ontario. We saw their reaction to the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government of the past eight years.



When the House reconvened on October 22 with the speech from the throne, I was hopeful—minority government here—that maybe we could see some new and innovative ideas in the throne speech, a little more creativity; maybe even have listened to the opposition leaders and their parties and maybe work together a bit before the throne speech came. But I didn't really see that in the throne speech.

The throne speech clearly failed to address the needs and the concerns that we were asking for. If you look at the recent election, it was 63% of the voters in the province that decided the current direction of the McGuinty government was not what they wanted. That's a pretty strong message. I hope the minority government Liberals are listening to that.

We have the crushing debt of \$16 billion, a billion more than it was even during the election. Then, in the throne speech they announced \$2.5 billion in new government spending—but that is exactly what the government did: They decided to spend. As my colleagues have said, they've got a little bit of a spending problem. I think there are help lines for that. We're trying to guide them, but.

The home renovation tax credit, for example: digging an even deeper hole. I mean, the government claims the tax credit will be funded by lower spending on existing business support programs and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, as well as lower-than-forecast costs for tax-related expenditures in the Ministry of Revenue. So, I mean, that's a lot of stuff, but in other words, they over-budgeted in one area and are hoping to use this to pay for the tax credit. There's no saving or cost-cutting. So the so-called relief for seniors to spend at least \$10,000—in my riding there aren't many seniors that have that kind of money to spend on renovations. They're trying to pay their bills and put food on the table. The irony is that the same Dalton McGuinty government has slapped the HST on home renovations, making them even more expensive.

I know my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke mentioned drunken sailors yesterday. I couldn't believe that we were thinking along the same lines. Sometimes that happens. But to say that they are spending like drunken sailors would certainly be an insult to drunken sailors.

**Interjection:** No offence.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** No offence, but really.

Tim Hudak, the leader of the Ontario PC caucus, offered specific, concrete proposals to help rein in this disgraceful—and it is disgraceful—mismanagement of taxpayers' dollars, and that was a message that was sent in the election. When you compare it to the private sector wages, public sector salaries are clearly out of whack. The legislated mandatory freeze on the salaries of government employees would help to bring spending under control and set a positive example for Ontarians that this government finally understands the seriousness of the situation. But the Liberals didn't listen to that. They are actually going to be laying people off. The mandatory

wage freeze is actually a much better way to handle this. But anyway, you decided against that. You're going to be laying some people off.

The apprenticeship system: We offered reform of the apprenticeship system, saying it would create 200,000 skilled trade jobs that are desperately needed in our province. The member from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, who has been a champion of apprenticeship ratios—I myself have brought in motions and member's bills before about apprenticeship, to modernize it. That would have helped the skilled trade shortage that is coming down the pipe and that we all know about. I talked to tons of young people in my riding, and they can't get into the apprenticeship roles they want to get into. They can't fight the unions sometimes. The ratios are so out of whack. The small businesses can only help them so much because the ratios are so out of whack. They'd like to help more of them.

When you see other provinces modernizing their apprenticeship systems, making the ratios one-to-one as opposed to anywhere from the three- to five-to-one that we have with some of our trades, and then our young people leaving to go to other provinces to get the training because they want to get into that field, it's quite tragic. For years we've tried and tried, but no, the Liberals decided to do the College of Trades.

There's been a lot of discussion in the last two days about apprenticeships and the College of Trades. When they have a board where five out of the eight potential members of the board are union bosses or former union bosses, they're handing that back over to a special interest group: the union bosses. That is not what they need to do; that's not what they should do. It's outrageous. You're going to hear us continue on that. Change the ratio to one-to-one. You're making it too hard for our young people to enter the trades and the skilled trade shortage is coming down. It's just unacceptable and irresponsible of this government.

1740

You know, the government maintained—the Working Families union. We saw that in the election, the \$9 million, \$10 million worth of ads that Working Families advertised against Tim Hudak. I mean, really, it's just outrageous. It used union money. I actually had union members in my riding who were so upset their union dues were used for partisan advertising and they never said that that was okay. It's absolutely outrageous what was done for the Working Families Coalition, and we'll still be talking about that, I'm sure, until the next election.

Hydro costs: No question, the hydro costs are a huge issue across the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I said before that people are selling their houses. Some seniors just can't afford those bills anymore. Families can't stay in their homes. I know in the northern part of the riding, they're actually having woodlots put out so people can actually bring logs of wood to deposit so volunteers can cut wood up to give it to people to heat their homes for the winter. It's a serious situation.



We in the PC caucus joined with the NDP. The member from Willowdale said, "Work together." Well, we did last week. We worked together to support the NDP motion to take the provincial portion of the HST off the home heating. That would have helped a lot of people in my riding. So maybe the member from Willowdale has some influence again and the government will decide to bring that forward as an actual law, which would be good to see, because that's what the people wanted. They needed some relief so that they could stay in their houses.

I receive letters, phone calls, emails all the time—desperate people, people who phone in. And the smart meters: Ever since the smart meters came in, all of a sudden they get a bill and it's \$3,000 because "You owe us that from when." Customer service, you're on hold for four or five hours. It's just outrageous that Hydro One asks them to read their meters. It's their responsibility to go out to see if the smart meter is working, not to leverage more bills onto people and not verify or justify where the bills have come from.

I just had one again the other day. It was \$12,000. These people said that they can't afford it. They're working for \$12, \$13, \$14 an hour, and all of a sudden there's an extra \$12,000 bill.

The farmers have to get up. They say that at 3 o'clock in the morning they've got to get that milking in before the peak kicks in at 7 a.m. I don't believe agriculture was mentioned in this speech from the throne. That was a chance to reach out to rural Ontario and they didn't take it, Madam Speaker.

That is the situation we have out there. We wanted relief for people, tax relief; the provincial portion of the HST not only off their hydro, but off their home heating. And we did try, as I said, last week, but they would not show real leadership or listen to the people of Ontario when they said, "Enough is enough. Your spending is out of control. I can't live in my house anymore. Forget about putting money away, I just can't pay my bills or put food on my table."

Health care was mentioned and I hope—the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is here—that we can work together on some health care initiatives, because rural Ontario has some very different and very real problems as compared to the urban centres.

I met with the LHINs, the chair, the board of directors—not the board of directors, but just the chair and the CEO—and expressed the repeated frustration from my service deliverers in the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Geography is, no question, a problem, but the amalgamation of some of the services is really going to decrease the services that they receive. I know that they're amalgamating the Canadian Mental Health Associations in Lindsay and Peterborough right now and we're quite scared, up in Lindsay and north in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, that there will be less services. I know that is certainly what the minister does not want; we've had many, many discussions about mental health services. So I think we all have to work together to do a much better job of delivering those

services—and yes, geography is a challenge, but we have the service providers that are capable of doing it. We need to be out of the box, maybe funded a little differently or have leeway in rural Ontario for funding.

I'll mention the EMS and the non-urgent transfers, especially for ambulance services, the costs that are incurred sometimes when an ambulance has to take a patient out to the GTA, especially, or some type of specialized service. That leaves them short an ambulance in the area. They do their best to cross-cover, but it is a real situation that's hurting their budgets. So I've brought that again to the attention of the LHIN. Some of it is not their responsibility, but they have to know the whole health care package out there and the challenges that we have.

Again, the funding should be allowed to be different, depending on our priorities in rural Ontario. Those are a couple of examples of where I think that we can make a difference, that we should work together to make the difference, because one size does not fit all. I'm hoping that we have some progress on that because I'll certainly be speaking a lot more on it at every opportunity I can get.

In the throne speech, they certainly mentioned the Green Energy Act. Well, that was a little bit of an uproar in my riding, to say the least, in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Forcing industrial wind turbines on to unwilling communities created a huge firestorm. I know that we're going to be addressing that tomorrow in private members' business, but it was a huge firestorm in my riding, and they were right—no local input.

One of the wind turbines is actually on the Oak Ridges moraine. For heaven's sakes, you can't hardly put up a tool shed or cut down your tree without a whole bunch of permits, yet they're going to put an industrial wind turbine 40 storeys high on the Oak Ridges moraine. It's outrageous.

I'm very proud of the member from Prince Edward-Hastings for bringing that part of the planning authority in his private member's bill back to the Legislature tomorrow, in the second week in the Legislature. I know that many people from the riding are coming to support him. You can cancel wind turbines in Scarborough, cancel power plants if you want to, but do the people in rural Ontario actually mean less? Is their health care of less value to everybody here?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Careful, Laurie—

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** We called for a moratorium, on health and wind turbine concerns.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's a good question.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It is a good question, though. It's a good question because there are very different reports, and we just said, "Moratorium until we get the proof and the studies being brought forward." There are lots of cases that I can make for health studies.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Come on, Laurie. You're a nurse. You know about evidence.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** There's lots of evidence for you, if the minister's worried about evidence.



They pitted neighbours against neighbours. That's a horrible thing to do. That's bad policy. When you can't do it in a proper process and have the municipality stand in with the Planning Act to discuss these green energy projects, that's horrible. That's what you get. You get communities fighting against each other, neighbours fighting against each other. It's just not good policy. We were proudly standing with those people opposed to the wind turbines coming to their areas, and we'll be proudly standing with them again tomorrow.

Jobs are a big issue up in Haliburton-Kawartha-Lakes Brock. I have some of the lowest household incomes in the province of Ontario. They need to have an economy that's going to generate jobs. We wanted to bring some tax relief for small businesses so they have confidence to invest in their business, confidence to hire that extra person to work in their stores.

We were promising to do that if we could get in government because we needed to give people faith. We need to have a competitive province to attract jobs. You know, 100 private sector jobs an hour that we're losing I believe is what we're up to in the province. Our economy is getting worse. People are scared. They're not confident to spend money, and some of them, as I said, are in very tough times. They can hardly stay in their houses if they could pay their hydro bills and put food on the table.

We wanted to stimulate the economy. The 407 expansion—the Liberals messed around with that completion date two or three times. We needed it to come to 35/115. They kept delaying that. If there are potential companies coming or industry that wants to come, they're looking at the overall plan. We needed that done as soon as possible, the 407 to 35/115. The Liberals had to deal with the federal government; they missed that deadline. They're making it—2020 was your last thing, but maybe it's even longer than that now. Maybe the member for Peterborough can tell us.

We needed the 35 four-laning brought in. They needed some infrastructure. You need to spend money wisely when you're in government. The wasteful spending that we have seen—not making good investments to the riding, as I mentioned those two large infrastructure projects. But you've got to make wise investments to stimulate the economy. Meanwhile, your spending has gone up by 80% in the last eight years. Are we any better off? We're not. The investments weren't wise.

Just even little things that you could change around, like the—

*Interjection.*

1750

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I didn't hear what he said. Anything you could change around, even the MNR. We heard a lot from the little local fish hatchery people up in Haliburton. We've had the fish hatcheries in Haliburton—volunteer-run fish hatcheries. They do a lot of the MNR work. They're being taxed by this government as industrial polluters. Why would that happen? Why would you do that? Why wouldn't you work with the local Haliburton hatcheries that are in our communities,

as in Haliburton? I know many of the other Liberal members have them. Why would you tax them as industrial polluters? Things like that that you can make changes to that would help our communities and help tourism and fishing in our area, help out the MNR who, according to Environmental Commissioner—he was very critical of the government's doing business in the MNR and the MOE. Things like that, getting the communities engaged, do not cost the government a lot and stimulate our local economies—and for the greater good, when I speak of the fish hatchery.

Madam Speaker, I think that the McGuinty government, by not accepting our amendments so far—maybe I still hold out hope that they will accept our amendments to put a cap on the private sector, a wage freeze, to have the apprenticeship system changed, to update it—I know the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is here and I know he's listening intently; you may have heard it a few times this week—to change that ratio to 1 to 1 to make it easier for our young people to get into the trade of their choice, but because there's a skilled trades job shortage coming, which we've heard about and heard about, to stop that bottleneck. Those are the types of things you could do and what has been called for. I know that he's probably going to mention the reports that are out there, but we have consulted a lot with the trades for years and years, and the apprenticeship ratio is what we've heard that they need to change.

The province of Ontario needs to have a government that's going to spend their money responsibly, especially in these hard economic times, so that the taxpayers have faith that the government is making some positive changes instead of just squandering lots and lots of money on programs that aren't effective, aren't getting them any more health care.

I know the new member from Barrie mentioned the underserved area, the changes that occurred. That certainly happened in parts of my riding. It doesn't help us, in our communities, to attract doctors. We do think some of the health care things that have been changed—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** You've got more doctors now than you had before.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm just about to finish.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I was going to pay you a compliment, if you'd let me.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Member for Peterborough, you're not in your seat.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was just going to say that we've seen some positive things with the family health teams and community health centres that are in the area, but when you take an underserved designation out of a large part of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, that does present a bit of a challenge to attract doctors. That's a negative. So some things are working better, and I applaud them; I'm not shy at that. Some things aren't working as well and could

work better, and I hope that the minister will listen to some of the changes that we'd like to see take place.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My time is up.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to first of all congratulate the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock on her election. I know that I am very honoured—it's an honour and a privilege to be elected to the Legislature and to be serving my constituents. I know that you share that honour as well.

I listened with great interest to some of the things that you talked about and I have to say that I agree with a lot of it. A lot of what you were talking about—you're talking about how the constituents in your riding have been affected by eight years of McGuinty reign, kind of a reign of terror for many of us in the province—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Speaker—oh, I'm not in my seat—I would ask you to rule on the issue of “reign of terror,” because that conjures up some very—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

I'd ask the member to withdraw the comment.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'm sorry. I withdraw the comment.

Well, let's just say that many areas of the province are left grappling; I'll put it that way.

I know that you were talking about how, in particular, rural Ontario has been affected, and I can say in my riding of Kenora-Rainy River, that is both rural and northern, that we feel particularly affected. It was also very telling, talking about the 63% of voters who rejected the McGuinty Liberals, and that's of the people, we have to remember, who actually came out and voted. There is a real problem, Madam Speaker, with losing the faith of the electorate. I think that what we need to do is we need to work together so that we can restore that faith, earn that trust in the voters. To do that, as I said, we have to work together, and I look forward to that. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thanks very much. I've just been doing a running tally from the opposition. Week one, Madam Speaker: \$12 billion in new spending that you guys want—two hospitals in Brampton, repairs in Cambridge, a new college, \$140 million in Barrie—\$12 billion. Whatever happened to “need to have” and “nice to have”? Things that we've been living without for—\$12 billion. I can't wait until next week. Is it \$24 billion? This kills me.

The other one I love: The Green Energy Act is like on a poster somewhere—I don't know—in your offices on a dart board. Transmission lines: Why don't we take transmission lines and allow municipal councils to decide where transmission lines are? Have you read the health problems associated with heavy electrical lines through agriculture? I will send you about 15 pages that I looked at, with research being done. You've never worried about transmission lines.

Automobiles: I live half a block from the Gardiner freeway, where everyone in the GTA runs by my door. I'm waiting for the people from my friends over there to come and talk to me about car exhaust being—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I was going to say—sorry.

**Interjection:** No, keep going.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Okay, I'll keep going. Sorry.

The other thing is—this kills me—the rural bias. I represent, they estimate now, somewhere between 160,000 and 180,000 people. Before redistribution, my constituents will be over 200,000. My constituent gets half of a vote to a third of a vote for most other constituents in this province. You never hear me whining about it. You hear me talking about my days in a small farming community in eastern Ontario, and how I have to care about the people in Alexandria as much as my friend Grant does. You guys are just precious.

So how are you going to balance the budget? This is the new reality, kids. You're part of the team. You can't do this anymore. We have to balance the budget with you—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Comments? The member for—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** You drank all the Kool-Aid.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** You're not in your seat, member from Durham.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Excuse me?

The member for Huron-Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, I worried for a very long time that rural Ontario had lost its voice, and I'm so glad to see that its voice has come back to Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Laurie, on behalf of Tim Hudak, the PC caucus, and actually the entire assembly, it's great to see you back here. You're going to do a great job on behalf of all of your constituents. You're focusing on jobs, relief for families and cleaning up the waste that has become the norm over the last eight years, which is shameful.

Rural Ontario actually has spoken volumes in the sense that there is a real change of tide, and we hope, through your voice, people start hearing and listening about the priorities that are important.

You spoke about the economic issues in your riding; you spoke about the worry about health care; you spoke about the worry about jobs, and I believe that you have the demeanour and the will to work together with people and you'll lead by example. I don't hesitate in saying that.

With that, I think that I would like to thank you for drawing to attention here today that the throne speech shamefully and totally ignored rural Ontario and Ontario's number one industry, which is the agri-food



industry. It was absolutely shameful and we need to start taking a look at what really is the substance of this province.

1800

You also raised the issue of green energy, and yes, we need local autonomy back. We need to be working together, and tomorrow I look forward to speaking to that in more detail with you.

Again, congratulations on your win. It speaks volumes. The Haliburton area, Kawartha Lakes and Brock welcome change and we welcome—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to congratulate the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock on her election, and I'd like to follow up on some of her comments, particularly that the only thing that got less mention in the throne speech than northern Ontario was agriculture, and that is a shame.

But there's another thing that—and we all knocked on a lot of doors. We all knocked on a lot of doors in the last little while, and one thing that I find galling is that we seem to have tax cuts for corporations with no strings.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** And risk management for farmers with no strings.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Hey, hey, I'm not talking about—yet we've got the healthy homes renovation tax credit for seniors, with lots of strings, where they have to spend \$10,000 to get \$1,500 back.

I knocked on the door—and several; lots of doors—of a gentleman in Thorne. He was about 80, and he came to the door in his walker and he could use something like that in his house. But what he told me, he says, "John, my monthly cost of living to run my house and everything is \$1,800, to run everything in this house"—

**Interjection:** What?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** This is northern Ontario.

**Interjection:** No firewood?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** When you're 80, it's a hard time cutting and splitting firewood, my friends, believe me; if you've ever tried it.

His monthly income was \$1,400 and his savings were almost gone. Now, how is he going to benefit from the healthy home seniors renovation tax cut?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He's not.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** He's not. And what is the proportion, if you could please—if someone on the government side could please come up with the figures of how many, what percentage of seniors can participate in this program—tell us that—and, of the ones who can, can actually pay for it themselves.

Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'd like to thank the members from Kenora-Rainy River, Timiskaming-Cochrane, Toronto Centre and my colleague, of course from—what was that?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Huron-Bruce.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Huron-Bruce. I'm getting all these names back down here—for listening to the debate and participating back.

I think that, as much as the Minister for Training, Colleges and Universities didn't really hear the message, we'll keep repeating it for you about the trades. It is true; it is a passion of mine, so I won't be quiet about it. But anyway, we'll have those discussions and we'll try to make those changes with that.

You know, we talked a lot about seniors. I do have one of the highest populations of seniors in the province of Ontario, and those stories that we are seeing about the hydro bills, the heating coming up in the wintertime—their fears are all very true. The fact of the jobs, the need for more jobs; more ideas that we have to stimulate jobs in rural Ontario and specifically in my riding that I'm speaking about today. We're going to keep pressing the government to make those changes. We need people to succeed in rural Ontario, or else the rest of Ontario doesn't succeed.

So we think that the government should spend money very differently. We're going to be saying that. The home renovation tax cut does not equal the relief on their hydro bill or their home heating bill that we had proposed from taking the provincial HST portion off that.

We're very concerned about the health care issues that we have in rural Ontario. I mentioned before that I have people talking to me every day with ideas, which is a relief because we have people that care in the communities and they are saying that government money is not being spent the right way for rural Ontario.

I've worked in the city also. It's not used enough there in certain things, that we can transport it over to rural Ontario's ideas. So I think that we can work a lot with that: No less health care in urban Ontario, just some more health care in rural Ontario. So thank you, Madam Speaker.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1805.*

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Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	









<b>Rick Hansen Institute</b>	
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	220
<b>Community Care East York</b>	
Mr. Michael Prue .....	220
<b>Canada World Youth</b>	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	221
<b>Dave Gionet</b>	
Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	221
<b>McMaster Marauders football team</b>	
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	221
<b>Trek to Bethlehem in Bala</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller .....	221

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Accepting Schools Act, 2011, Bill 13, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2011 pour des écoles tolérantes, projet de loi 13, Mme Broten</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	222
<b>Anti-Bullying Act, 2011, Bill 14, Mrs. Witmer / Loi de 2011 sur la lutte contre l'intimidation, projet de loi 14, Mme Witmer</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	222
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	222
<b>Ontario Society of Professional Engineers Act, 2011, Bill 15, Mr. Kwinter / Loi de 2011 sur l'Association des ingénieurs de l'Ontario, projet de loi 15, M. Kwinter</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	222
Mr. Monte Kwinter .....	222
<b>Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 16, Mr. Hillier, Mr. Craitor, Ms. DiNovo / Loi de 2011 modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait à la sécurité publique liée aux chiens, projet de loi 16, M. Hillier, M. Craitor, Mme DiNovo</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	222
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	222
<b>Jewish Heritage Month Act, 2011, Bill 17, Mr. Colle, Mr. Shurman, Ms. DiNovo / Loi de 2011 sur le Mois du patrimoine juif, projet de loi 17, M. Colle, M. Shurman, Mme DiNovo</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	223
Mr. Mike Colle .....	223
<b>Respect for Voters Act, 2011, Bill 18, Ms. Jones / Loi de 2011 sur le respect des électeurs, projet de loi 18, Mme Jones</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	223
Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	223

## MOTIONS

<b>Member for Pickering-Scarborough East</b>	
Hon. John Milloy .....	223
Motion agreed to .....	223
<b>Annual report, Chief Medical Officer of Health</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	223

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

<b>Anti-bullying initiatives / Prévention de l'intimidation</b>	
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	223
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	225
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	225
<b>Accessibility in the House</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	226

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Todd Smith .....	226
<b>Diagnostic services</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	227
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette .....	227
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	227
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	227
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	227
<b>Replacement workers</b>	
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	228
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	228
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	228
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	228
<b>Lyme disease</b>	
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	229
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	229
<b>Health care funding</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	229

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Throne speech debate

Mr. Todd Smith .....	230
Mr. Rod Jackson .....	231
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	233
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	233
Mr. John O'Toole .....	233
Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	234
Mr. Todd Smith .....	234
Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	234
Mr. John Vanthof .....	236
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	237
Mr. Randy Pettapiece .....	238
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	238
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	238
Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	239
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	239
Mr. David Zimmer .....	240
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	242
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	242
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	242
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	243
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	243
Ms. Laurie Scott .....	243
Ms. Sarah Campbell .....	247
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	247
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	247
Mr. John Vanthof .....	248
Ms. Laurie Scott .....	248
Debate deemed adjourned .....	248



## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 30 November 2011 / Mercredi 30 novembre 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan</b>	
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	199
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	203
Mr. John O'Toole .....	204
Mr. Steve Clark .....	206
Mr. Michael Prue .....	207
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	207
Mme France Gélinas .....	208
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	208
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	208
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	209

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Rick Bartolucci .....	209
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	209
Hon. John Gerretsen .....	209
Mr. Reza Moridi .....	209
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	209
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	209

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Apprenticeship training</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	209
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	209
<b>Apprenticeship training</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	210
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	210
<b>Economic development</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	211
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	211
<b>Mining industry</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	212
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	212
<b>Apprenticeship training</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	213
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	213

### Public transit

Mr. Jonah Schein .....	213
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	213

### Economic development

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza .....	214
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	214

### Economic development

Mr. Norm Miller .....	214
Hon. Rick Bartolucci .....	215
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	215

### Securities industry

Mr. Michael Prue .....	215
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	215

### Renewable energy

Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	216
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	216

### Pan Am Games

Mr. Rod Jackson .....	216
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	216

### Anti-bullying initiatives

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	217
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	217

### Post-secondary education

Mr. Grant Crack .....	217
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	217

### Anti-bullying initiatives

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	218
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	218

### Home care

Ms. Cindy Forster .....	218
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	219

### Diabetes

Mr. Jeff Leal .....	219
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	219

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

#### Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	219
------------------------	-----

#### Events in Hamilton East–Stoney Creek

Mr. Paul Miller .....	220
-----------------------	-----

#### Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	220
-------------------------	-----

*Continued on inside back cover*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 1 December 2011

Jeudi 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 2011

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Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 1 December 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall we pray?  
*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 30, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?  
The member from Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If I might preface my remarks, as you were reading out the Buddhist prayer this morning, I wonder of the need for a Legislature at all; if things are just going to unfold as they should and if we just need to watch the waves come in and go out, whether we need one at all. But I'm going to take this opportunity to talk about it, notwithstanding the wise words that were spoken by you.

If I might also preface my remarks, this last couple of weeks since we've come back, I have heard so many of the new members give their inaugural speeches. I have heard so many of them talk about their ridings, their friends, their families and how they got involved in politics, and I lament the fact, as the Clerk will rightly point out, that I am probably the only person in the modern history of this place who never gave an inaugural speech.

**Interjection:** How did you get away with that?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I don't know. And I don't know whether, after 10 years here, it's timely for me to do so, but I'm going to think that it's not and therefore just go ahead with my debate on this bill.

This bill, of course, was a major plank of the government—probably its only plank, along with reducing inflated and really unfortunate fees that students pay for post-secondary education. It was a government that ran on two planks, this being one of them. So I suppose it's inevitable that we will be talking about this in the very

first couple of weeks of the session and that the Liberals will want to show that they are somehow making good on what they had to say during the election on an economic issue. But I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this is pretty small potatoes in terms of a whole economic agenda and how to get the province moving. It's pretty small potatoes. It amounts to, I think, some significant dollars—\$130 million—but the effect it will have on the majority of Ontarians is absolutely tiny.

They want to show, this government, that they are taking action on their plan and that they are willing to take and spend \$130 million of taxpayers' money in an effort to show that they're trying to do something. They're trying to do something for that very, very tiny portion of the population who are over 65 years of age, who have \$10,000 in available cash, who are in need of repair in the home and who are thinking long-term about what they need to do in order to stay in that home. I would think that this is a pretty, pretty small number of people: maybe 1%, maybe less.

We know, from statistics of home builders and home renovators in many places, including, most recently, what I saw from Sudbury, that of all the home renovations that are done by people, only 1.7% of home renovations are done by those over the age of 65. The big renovations are done primarily by young people who are renovating or expanding their home because they're expecting children. So, here we are: At the most, we're looking at 1.7% of the people who are doing home renovations, and those that have the \$10,000.

This government says that this bill is essential and absolutely necessary because it's going to create 10,500 jobs and keep seniors in their homes. That's what this is all about. I'm all in favour. I think everybody in this entire room, this entire Legislature—whether you're on the government side, the official opposition or the third party, we all believe that seniors should stay in their own homes as long as is practicable, and we all want to help people to do that. But we also know that most seniors are very content and comfortable in their own homes, and very few of them are willing or able to expend the amounts of money that this bill envisages.

I am also extremely skeptical about any claim that this is going to create 10,500 jobs. I listened through the entire last Legislature as government member after government member stood in this place and talked about the jobs that were being created: the 10,000 here or the 50,000 here or the 60,000 here, or the 300,000. It just keeps coming and coming and coming, and the unemployment rate is at 10%. If you live in a place like



London or Windsor, you know full well that 10% of the people are unemployed, in spite of all the claims that are being made over there. Every time they dole out money to a company or a factory, they say, "We're creating 100 jobs, 200 jobs," and then we see that factory close without creating a single thing. So when you talk about 10,500 jobs, I think we all need to take that with a grain of salt.

Will it create some work? Of course it will. Any expenditure of money by anybody, whether it's government or private or individuals—any expenditure creates jobs. Even if you go into the dollar store and buy something made in China, you are creating a job here for the salesperson who sells it and for the stockperson who puts it on the shelf. Any expenditure of money does that, but this is, quite frankly, not terribly believable.

Let's take a close look, Mr. Speaker, at this bill. Most seniors, in my view and in the view of most economists, cannot afford the \$10,000 to begin with in order to save \$1,500. Most seniors, if you look at the level of poverty and other things, have a difficult time, because with pensions failing, with pensions in many cases not indexed or not existing at all, it becomes very, very difficult, as prices increase, for them to maintain the standard of living that they expected.

For those who retired 10 or 15 years ago, they have seen a total erosion of their spending ability, a total erosion as things like home heating and electricity and transit and gasoline prices and food and everything keeps rising at a rate faster than their ability to pay it.

0910

So, I am highly skeptical, as I said at the beginning, that there are that many seniors out there who have \$10,000 that they are willing to expend in order to put in a new bathroom or in order to put in a ramp or an elevating or lift device to take them up the stairs. Are there some? Of course there are some; there are some seniors who can take advantage of this. But can the majority do it? I would think not, and I would think that even if they want to have it done, they will be reluctant to spend that much money. I know them; I talk to them. I talk to seniors all the time. They don't want to spend the money.

They are happy to live in their home, even though it may be in need of repair, because they are mindful of the necessity of keeping that little nest egg as long as they can. Also, many of them want to leave it to their children. Quite frankly, they'd rather leave it to their children than put in a new bathroom.

So, how many can afford the \$10,000? That's the first question we have to ask ourselves. If you look deep in your hearts, government members, you will know there are not many who are going to have this money or want to spend it.

I would think, even though this may cost \$130 million if fully farmed out, you are going to find out that the number of people applying for this, given the criteria you have, will be far fewer than that, and the actual expenditure from this government will be far less than that. Now,

that may be a good thing, because I don't think this bill will have the consequences you think it will.

The second thing: Every single cost borne by the senior who spends up to \$10,000 is subject to tax, and we know that the majority of the tax on a home renovation will go to the people who come to build it. Yes, there are costs for supplies like new sinks and taps; yes, there are costs for supplies like elevating devices that will take them up the stairs. But the majority of the costs that will be borne are those of the workers who will come to put them in, the tradespeople who will come to put them in. This is all subject to HST.

Here is a government that says, "We're going to give you \$1,500," but that same government is going to make as much as \$800 back in HST from these same seniors. Maybe that's not a bad thing if you're an economist and you're looking at the cost to the taxpayer. You dangle the carrot out there that you're giving \$1,500, but you know full well that you're going to get up to \$800 of that back in taxes.

So, how much is the senior really saving? I would think they will be a little bit skeptical of this as well.

The third thing you need to know is that a senior who does have the funds may have them locked. Very few of them will have \$10,000 simply sitting in a bank account or in a bank account that is protected from interest. Very few of them will have that. If they have to take the money out, more than likely it will be locked into things like RRSPs. A senior who wants to take advantage of this and removes the money from an RRSP, which will be a lot of them, is subject to have that taxed at a higher rate. They will have to pay income tax on that money to take it out in the first place. So if they think, "Well, I need a new bathroom; the government is going to give me back \$1,500 if I spend \$10,000," they're going to have to take probably closer to \$15,000 out of the RRSP in order to have the \$10,000 in the first place to take advantage of the program. They are going to have to pay tax of up to \$5,000 from their RRSP to do it.

I think you're going to find that a whole bunch of them are not willing to do that. You're going to find a whole bunch of them are going to say, "This is not a program that works for me. This doesn't do anything to alleviate my problem. It actually may even make it worse." I think that the take-up from those people who have to take the money out of a secure deposit, an RRSP, will limit the effectiveness of this program.

Next, anybody who does a major retrofit of their home—I'm talking about electricity, about plumbing, about things that are just not cosmetic; not just putting a handle on the bathtub, but things that are of major import and have to be done—requires a building permit. Building permits are good things. Building permits ensure that the contractor who has been hired makes the job professional, well done and safe. It makes sure that the electricity, if it's being put into the walls, is safe and that it does not cause a fire. It makes sure that the plumbing that is put into the walls does not leak and cause damage to a house, damage that can be more expensive than what the original repair was. Municipalities across this province



have the authority to go in and issue permits and make sure the work is done, and seniors, of course, are going to have to pay for those permits.

But having paid for those permits—all well and good—those permits are subject to MPAC; they are subject to the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. And when you do a major retrofit of your house, particularly if you put a basement in your house, an in-law apartment; if you put in new washrooms, a new kitchen; if you do those kinds of things, you increase the value of your house—of course you do—and then it's subject to increasing the tax on the house. We all know, those of us who are property owners, that every time you do a major renovation, MPAC will come around. They will reassess your house, your property taxes will rise, and then you have to question yourself: Was this program that I intended to get \$1,500 back from actually working for me? Did it actually have the desired effect?

I would think, not so much seniors, but those who are trying to keep Mom and Dad at their home are going to wonder whether this program works for them, because in the end, with the combination of the HST, with the combination of fees for permits, with the combination of property tax increases, people will say that this is not the type of expenditure that works best for them. They will do what countless other people do, so sadly, in this province: They will go to the underground economy, because you can get the work done more cheaply, you can do it without permit, you can do it without MPAC knowing about it in the first place and you can build it. They will forgo and not even use this grandiose scheme—which maybe, as a taxpayer, is a good thing. Maybe people out there will say, “I don't like this program, but it's not going to cost me very much.”

I think government needs to look at this. This is a much-ballyhooed program. It was only one of two principal ideas you floated in the last election. But, quite frankly, I think it's not going to be taken up at all.

We then wonder: what, why, how? What made the government decide to do this? Did they look to some other jurisdiction and say, “Another jurisdiction has had success with this. This is how we came up with this plan. This has been working brilliantly in Quebec or Manitoba or BC or someplace in the United States”? I don't think so. Because as we look around to those other provinces, we see that they have far superior programs to this, ones that are actually taken up by the poor, by the old, by the disabled; programs that actually help them to retrofit their homes without all of the worries and all of the bother and all of the concerns that I've outlined.

In Quebec, they made a conscious decision many years ago to target and to help their poorer seniors, especially those seniors who were disabled or potentially may be disabled as conditions in old age worsen. They made a decision to work in conjunction with their regional municipalities and that those regional municipalities would assist in helping seniors to stay in their homes.

0920

They have a program which sounds, at the outset, very much like what this government has put forward. They

will fund access ramps, remodelling of bathrooms, the widening of doors, elevation devices or anything else that will make mobility inside the home for seniors, disabled seniors, the disabled, those in need—they will make them work. But the difference between Quebec and Ontario is that Quebec is willing to put its money where its mouth is and not play some kind of shell game which, in the end, will absolutely negate the benefit that is expected to go to seniors.

In Quebec, for instance, there are grants for seniors. Any senior who is disabled can get up to \$16,000 in a grant to remodel their home—not spend \$10,000 of your own and get \$1,500 back, minus all the taxes and permit fees and everything else you have to pay, but \$16,000 in grant money—because Quebec understands that most of the seniors who will be applying for this do not have the economic wherewithal and that the \$16,000 that they're expending is absolutely essential to keep people in their homes. It's clearly far better to spend that money up front than to have seniors go into retirement homes or into old age homes or to have other costly government programs. So they spend up to \$16,000 if you are a senior who is disabled.

Also, an ordinary senior can get up to a \$3,500 grant right off the top. Now, is that getting \$10,000 worth of repair done to your home? No. It's getting \$3,500. But the \$3,500 is cash that they get without expending their own hard-earned money that many of them don't have. So if you need something relatively minor, like a walk-in bathtub or grip bars or a kitchen put on a lower floor that is going to assist you to stay in your home, that's what the Quebec government pays up to \$3,500 for. That's for any senior—\$16,000 if you're a disabled or potentially disabled senior—and that keeps people in their homes, and it's well taken up. They've been doing this since 1991, for 20 years. The program works.

So I have to ask myself: Why does the government of Ontario go out and do something which is diametrically opposed to the most successful seniors' program to keep them in their own homes in the country, which is just a couple of hundred kilometres to the east of here, of this building? I mean, it works. For those who come from Ottawa, it's across the river. From the Cornwall area, you can see Quebec. You can see what they do and how they do it. At least once or twice a year, we meet with our counterparts in Quebec. Sometimes they come here; sometimes we go there. We meet with them and we talk about their programs, our programs, how we can mesh them, how we can make them work. We're supposed to learn from them, and in fact we've learned much through that interparliamentary committee that meets through the aegis of the Speaker's office.

But I don't think the government learned anything on this one, because instead of doing what Quebec does, they've gone out and done something different. Not only does Quebec give \$16,000 to disabled seniors, not only do they give \$3,500 in grants to seniors who are not disabled, but they also have other grant programs that the disabled and some seniors are eligible for. The municipi-



palities with whom they work also have grant monies available that can, in special circumstances, be given as well.

The municipalities have the authority to go in and to look at the homes and make assessments and make recommendations. Does every senior get the money? No. Every senior who applies gets the \$3,500, provided it's done by a registered contractor. But if there are special needs, the municipality has people who go in and look at it. They say, "We think that there's something more that needs to be done to help this individual."

Municipalities can also give grants of up to \$7,000 to keep people in their own homes and, in absolutely exceptional circumstances, where there is specialized equipment that is required as well, have the authority to give a further \$10,000 grant. So it is quite conceivable that a disabled senior in Quebec trying to stay in their own home can get the full government-of-Quebec grant, the grant from the municipality in which they live, and a specialized grant to help them stay in their own home amounting to \$23,000. And this government here is talking about maybe \$1,500, subject to tax, and that's what is being given away.

Now, are these tough times? Sure, they're tough times. Does the government have a lot of money? No, the government doesn't have a lot of money.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** They're giving it away to corporations.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Well, they're giving it away to corporations, but I'm not sure they're giving it away to the seniors and those who need it the most. This is the whole point of this. Is this a bad bill? No, it's not a bad bill. But is it doing what the government says it's going to do? No, it is not.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** She missed your speech. I can't believe it.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I think the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is perhaps missing some of what I have to say—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I've been here the whole time.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** He's going to repeat it; hold on.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Maybe I should start again; perhaps in French.

But this is what is happening in terms of this bill, and the government ought not to stand up and say how proud they are of this bill because it is not a particularly good one.

Is it going to cause any grief? I don't think so. Is it going to cost a lot of money? I don't think it's going to cost what you say it's going to cost. Is it going to help a lot of people? Absolutely not. It's not; you need to know this. A year from now, two years from now, when the auditor looks at this and says, "How is this program working?" they're going to say, "This \$130 million that we're supposed to spend: There's hardly any take-up on it," and somebody's going to come along and recommend that it be done away with because it's simply not work-

ing. In the meantime, we have a whole lot of people out there who watch these programs and who look at the government's spin and think that something is actually being done to help them, and in reality nothing is really being done to help them, save and except that approximately 1% or 1.5% of seniors—those over the age of 65 that actually have this kind of remedial work done in their homes.

So here we have it: We get a \$10,000 bill and we get a \$1,500 grant, if you're lucky, and this is limited to people who are over the age of 65. Now, I wonder; there's a whole bunch of boomers out there, including some in this room. There's a whole bunch of people out there who are planning for their retirement and, if they're careful, are planning for their older age. They know that over time, their health may deteriorate. Some of them may already be in circumstances where their health is deteriorating, with bad backs, with slipped discs, with any number of things that will require. But is there anything in this bill that helps them? Is there anything in this bill that helps somebody who is 55 or 60 years of age, who is trying to plan ahead while they still have some employment, while they still have equity, while they still have some money that they want to expend? No; it's not there. So even those people who are less than 65, who are thinking about retirement and are thinking about staying in their homes and are thinking long-term about what needs to be done—this program is useless to them.

People need to know: This is totally useless to the majority of Ontarians. It will not help them even if they're thinking ahead, even if they're trying to do the right thing, even if they're trying to, in future years, not be a burden on the government. Nothing at all. Nothing at all. I think we need to take a close look at this.

In Quebec, if you are less than 65 years of age but you have some type of infirmity that is likely to grow worse over time, you are eligible for some of the grants. I think this province needs to do the same thing, because if we are serious about keeping people in their homes, we cannot do what is contained totally within the body of this bill. We have to think beyond that box. That's something that is not happening here.

**0930**

You know, in the final analysis, hardly anyone is being covered. In the final analysis, they might get a \$1,500 grant. In the final analysis, this is limited to a very small number of people of those who are over 65 years of age. In the final analysis, there is nothing that is going to limit the property taxes of those people who expend money on major renovations, including bathrooms, kitchens, plumbing and electricity. As soon as they spend that money, their home taxes are going to go up, and it's going to make them reluctant to do it. In the final analysis, it's going to make it very, very difficult.

I've sat here through the economic statement of the Minister of Finance. I've sat here and I've listened to him in press scrums, and I've listened to the Premier, and they're talking about what the budget is likely to contain next March. There are those who would commend this



government for saying that somehow health care and education are sacrosanct, for saying that they will not be touched, for saying that health care can go and rise as much as 3% in terms of expenditure and that education can rise as much as 1% in terms of expenditure.

But as the finance minister and the Premier have said repeatedly, every other government department is going to see major cuts. They're going to see major cuts that are going to have a devastating impact, I would put it to you, in many fields: impacts on the environment, impacts on municipalities, impacts on transportation, impacts on how we get around and transit for municipalities. They're going to be cut by some 33%; that's what he said. When those are cut, where do you think people are going to get those services, especially seniors? How are they going to do it?

We see in the city of Toronto all the machinations down there at city hall, all the infighting, all the right-wingers saying, "Well, we're going to raise taxes by 2.5% to cover this off. We're going to increase transit fees by 10 cents or a quarter a ride in order to cover this off. We're going to lay off 2,600 people—firefighters, police officers, transit workers and librarians—in order to cover this off," because they know full well that there's going to be no money from this government. They know full well, and they're taking the finance minister to heart, that in all these places other than education and hospitals, there are going to be reductions.

So you have to expect that those same seniors that this bill is intended to help are also going to face those impacts. They're going to see their property taxes rise. They're going to see their transit fares rise. They're going to see life being a little bit more than miserable. They're going to see user fees on a whole bunch of other things.

I think this government needs to look at its priorities. Is this the best priority? I'm not sure. That's the decision you've made, and I think the Legislature has to debate it and has to spend some time with it. But I'm not sure that this is the best priority on how to spend potentially \$130 million. Will I vote against it? I don't know. I would do almost anything to help seniors, but I want you to look into your heart of hearts: Is this money (a) going to be spent, and (b), if it is, is it going to have the same effect on helping the senior population that you think it is and that money spent somewhere else would have?

I know that the government has said they will not support the motion put forward by the NDP, and voted on in this Legislature with the support of the official opposition, to take the HST off home heating fuel. I will tell you, if the HST went off home heating fuel, every single senior in this province would benefit. Every single person in this province would benefit who heats their home or has their apartment heated by their landlord, because they pay it. Every single person would be the beneficiary.

When you have this bill, how many people will be beneficiaries? I know it costs only about one third as much. I know it's \$130 million versus \$350 million. I know that. I read the numbers—with all the catcalls over

there. But how many people are going to benefit from this? Ask yourself. Look at it. Who is going to benefit? Those 1% of seniors who actually do renovations? Maybe. And all the rest? No.

If we are truly trying to help the people of this province, you have to think more broadly. You have to be more inclusive. You have to look at what is being done. Certainly, the taxpayers expect that any time this amount of money is spent, there is a desired effect. I don't think it's here.

You know, the government says that this program is intended to help more than homeowners. I'm not sure that that's the case. I looked at it, and I searched my heart of hearts because I know they say that if you are a tenant you can apply to have your landlord repair your building, and the landlord might be able to get some kind of a grant out of this. I don't know how many tenants out there who are watching this have ever had much success in trying to get their landlord to redo their bathroom because they're old or have grab bars put in it to help them get out of the bathroom or put in a new kitchen because the kitchen is that bad or do anything else that will provide mobility, like taking out the door frame around their apartment so that they can get a wheelchair into it or changing any other thing inside a tenanted building.

Landlords aren't anxious to do that. They're not anxious to spend this kind of money. They're not going to spend \$10,000 to get \$1,500 back. They're not going to do it. And if they do do it, they're going to raise the rent of the tenant. We all know that that's exactly what happens. So, how many tenants—and there are tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of seniors who are tenants because some of them aren't able to maintain a home with the grass cutting and the snow shovelling and all the inherent things of homeownership, and so they choose, quite rightly, to live in apartments, to rent at that stage their life. It makes economic sense, and it makes social sense, and it makes sense in terms of their abilities to carry out the work.

So how many tenants are going to benefit from this? Any? Can anybody over there tell me that they think landlords are going to pick this up and start making all the renovations to their apartments?

There is a guy shaking his head—a brand newbie over there—who thinks that this is going to happen. He thinks that landlords are somehow going to find this a magic elixir. "I'm going to get \$1,500 back; I'm going to do \$10,000 of renovation for Mrs. Brown who is increasingly in poor health. I'm going to redo her whole bathroom so that she can stay with me another year or two in this apartment before she goes to an old age home, and I'm not going to raise her rent after I do it." Wow; there is a dreamer over there and a true believer if I have ever seen one, shaking his head in the affirmative. I don't know. I don't know. But if you think that's going to happen, I'm waiting for the auditor in a year or two to say, "How many tenants have actually been helped with this program?" because the answer will be zero—zero.



So, here's a government that's saying that tenants are eligible, but are they? Not at all. Are the poor eligible? Those who live in substandard housing, who have slum landlords and all those who barely make ends meet who would never have \$10,000 to expend in the first place: Are they eligible? Absolutely not. They don't have the money, so they can't get the rebate. If you don't have the cash up front, there's nothing for them there.

Are those who have to take money out of the RRSPs eligible? I guess they are, but at some considerable cost to themselves—much more than the rebate will actually be or that they would ever afford. So are they going to take their money out? Probably not. So they're not eligible either.

Are the property tax increases going to be worth it for the majority of people who are left? Probably not. So it's no surprise that when contractors and home builders and other people show us the list of who makes repairs to their homes, seniors are at the bottom. Those 65 years of age and older are in the 1% or 2% range of all the work that they have. Will that increase if you give them \$1,500 as a rebate? Maybe. It might go from 1% to 2%, or from 2% to 3%, but it's not going to make any kind of major difference.

0940

I think that the position taken by the opposition parties is much more practical. You know, we talked about removing the HST from heating costs. We grant that it's more expensive. We know it's more expensive than what is being proposed here. But it is infinitely universal. Every single person, regardless of their station in life, their age, their infirmity, gets relief. Every single person gets an opportunity to pay less for one of life's necessities.

I will tell you: Look across the country and at those provinces that have embraced the HST, and you will see that all of them have no HST on home heating, except us. Why is it that in Ontario this is a necessity that Liberals say cannot be changed, where they don't pay HST in Quebec, they don't pay it in Nova Scotia, they don't pay it in BC—and pretty soon they won't have an HST at all? They don't pay it in any other place. They don't pay HST on home heating.

So I have to ask: Who is being helped? Are you really helping those in need? When I see seniors, when I walk door to door—and I know all of you did in the months of August and September and until October 6. Was that not an issue? Was that not an issue, particularly for those who are struggling, particularly for those who are trying to hang on to their homes? They brought out heating bills to show me. They brought out electricity bills to show me. They asked, "How can the government help me? I can't afford this anymore. Every time the costs go up, every time the HST is added to it, it spikes and costs me an extra \$50 or \$100 a month. It's money I don't have." If you can help them, they won't be coming to you looking for home renovations. They will be happy to stay in their own home in the condition that it is.

When those days come when a person can no longer live in their own home—they come. I'm sad for that day.

I watched when my mother-in-law could no longer stay in her own home. I watched when my mother could no longer stay in her own home. We did all kinds of things to try to help them and keep that going as long as possible. In my mother-in-law's case, we went to Community Care East York, a wonderful agency. That agency came in every single week, did home cleaning, looked after her, helped her with the groceries at the little corner store, brought some stuff, made sure things were tidy, went through the fridge to make sure that the old food that wasn't any good anymore was thrown out, and a hundred things that people have to do. Community Care East York did a wonderful job for her. They will be celebrating, by the way, Mr. Speaker, their 40th anniversary next week, on Thursday.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Except, before you clap—the same newbie member is clapping about this. It's also their last anniversary, because although they were founded in 1971, they no longer have sufficient revenues from government and other sources. They're being forced to be subsumed by a larger organization. The larger organization is a good one; it's called WoodGreen, and it's in the east end of the city of Toronto. But Community Care East York, which has served the people of East York and north of the Danforth for 40 years, will be no more on January 1. Some of the workers—or most of the workers, I'm assured—will find work with WoodGreen, but they are being forced to amalgamate and join together to cut costs and administration, and the whole neighbourhood feel will be gone from this. But I'm thankful that there are still people like Community Care East York and WoodGreen that go out and help.

I think we need to make sure that the money is there, but I'm not sure, when the finance minister stands up and says that there's going to be a 33% reduction in some ministries, that they're not going to be affected as well. Before we start spending money in the way the government is proposing here, I want somebody to assure me from over there that we won't be cutting the other services that so many seniors rely upon every single day—things like Community Care East York.

My mother-in-law stayed in her home for an extra seven years after my father-in-law died, with the help of Meals on Wheels. Because they came every day to deliver her a hot meal, I didn't have to worry about her. I didn't have to come every single day and make sure she had something nutritious to eat, because the people from Meals on Wheels showed up every single day with a hot meal for her. They knocked on the door, made sure she took the meal, asked her how she was doing, and otherwise were sort of the eyes and ears of the community so that she continued to be safe.

I remember one day, Mr. Speaker, when I took her out for lunch. We went to one of her favourite restaurants for lunch at the same time that the Meals on Wheels came to deliver the meal. When I got home, there was a call for me on my answering machine, saying that they were worried about my mother-in-law because she hadn't



come to the door; that they had left the meal there but she hadn't come to the door. Was I aware? Was there anything wrong? Should I go down and check it out?

When I assured them that the reason she didn't come to the door was because I took her out for lunch, they were assuaged. But I was happy that they did that kind of thing and continue to do that kind of thing.

But I'm also worried that seniors' services like this one may be on the chopping block. There may be \$130 million for those who wish to renovate their homes, but I am also mindful that everything other than health care and education is now on the block. Community services are on the block. They will potentially have reductions. That's what the finance minister and the Premier have said, and the finance minister has said it can be up to 33%.

So I ask the government, in putting forward this bill, and when it goes to committee, as it invariably must—I'm asking the government to make sure that us spending \$130 million is not going to be to the detriment of all the other seniors' programs that are out there, because there are hundreds of thousands of people who rely on those. I would think that if these seniors out there see that their programs are being cut in other areas in order that a very select few—1% or 2%—who want renovations to their homes are given prominence while they are being cut, this government will hear a lot of ire.

I will tell you, there is nothing so woeful, nothing so strong, nothing so concerted in an effort as seniors who are roused, because they vote. They vote, and they are not afraid to tell you what they think of your program and of you as a politician, and whether you're helping them or not.

So, Mr. Speaker, I see I still have about 15 minutes left. Maybe I should do my maiden speech now, but I think, after 11 years, I won't do that. I won't talk about my family and the wonder of Beaches-East York, or even the wonders of Don Valley West and that wonderful community of Thorncliffe, which is part of it—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That would be okay.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Oh, now the minister wants to hear that. No, no, I think I'm going to wind it up. I think I've said what needs to be said.

When this goes to committee—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** What committee?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Well, that's a good question. Good questions have been asked. What committee? Because we don't have any committees operating yet. We don't have any committees operating here or anybody appointed to any of the committees, to date. We have been here now for two weeks. We are only going to be here for another four days. I've been told that, as the finance critic, I'm likely to be on the finance committee when it gets structured—I think that's a pretty safe assumption—but it has not been structured.

We are going to be sent out, as we are every single year in the month of January and February. We're going to be sent out across this province to hear from people about what they hope to see in the budget, how they hope

that the money is going to be expended; whether this is a good way to expend it or whether there are other programs that should maybe get the money instead.

How can we do that? How can we plan for that? We don't even know who's on the committee. We don't even know who the chair is. We don't even know when they're going to be given authority, when there's going to be a subcommittee meeting and who's going to be on it.

**0950**

I've heard some nasty rumours around here that the government is playing hardball and that they may only want one or two committees to actually operate. There are nine committees that are set out by statute for this place, and they all need to be working. We all need to be working to do that which is right for the people of Ontario, particularly for our seniors.

If this bill passes second reading, and it very well may, then it's going to have to be sent to a committee, and that's going to have to be done next week. I would hazard, since it is a finance bill, since it is a change to the taxation policy, that in all likelihood it's going to have to go to the finance committee. That's going to be added to all the things we already know: not only the budget consultation but this bill and, we've been told by the finance minister, the consideration of Don Drummond's report on where we go.

That's just what the finance committee is going to have to do in January, if it is ever structured. I don't know about other committees, but that's what's going to have to happen. So I ask the government members: You have one more caucus meeting next week. Talk about this issue. Talk about whether this is the kind of bill that needs to go forward. Maybe you should just hold back on it for a while and see what other seniors' programs are potentially at risk if \$130 million is spent in this way.

I also ask that we structure and get on with the work of government. We have a minority Parliament. The government does not have a majority and cannot expect to have a majority on the committees. It cannot happen; it will not happen. So let's get on with it. Let's work together.

I am willing to give consideration to this if the government can show me that what I have said today is somehow not correct, that there is going to be a much greater uptake, that there is a clamour out there for this kind of program and that nothing else will be hurt in its wake. I'm willing to give due consideration.

But we need to do that after hearing the people of this province. We need to have public deputations, as we always do in committee. We need the committee to look at the bare bones and make amendments. We need the amendments to come back and be debated before this House. This can only happen, Mr. Speaker, if we have properly functioning committees and a government that recognizes that we are in a minority situation and that the opposition needs to be heard.

For the new members: You may not have seen it yet, but there are two things up there. There's an owl over there and there's an eagle over there. We look, on this



side, at the eagle. The eagle is for the opposition to always remain vigilant so that we know what the government is doing, we keep the government to account and we ask the appropriate questions.

The owl is over there for the government members to always remember that you need to be wise. So, be wise. Think about this. Do the right thing. Set up the committee. Discuss in detail whether this bill is going to have the desired effect. If you think it is, then vote for it. If you think it needs to be changed, change it. If you think it's going to be deleterious to other government programs, make sure they are not hurt, because they are more sorely needed than this and they are much more important to the majority of seniors in this province.

I think that's enough time. I thank you very much for everyone's attention and thank you, Mr. Speaker, for yours.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? Questions and comments? The member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to start off by congratulating you on your new position as Deputy Speaker—First Deputy Speaker, I think. It's nice to see a fellow Scarborite in that position.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Scarborite? I'll provide Hansard with the spelling for "Scarborite" later on.

I only have two minutes to speak or critique the member from Beaches–East York. I have a question: Why is your riding called Beaches–East York when it should be The Beach–East York? I think it's officially now known as The Beach. So if he could explain that to me in his comments, I would really appreciate it. But anyway—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I'm very close to The Beach, and my wife and I go there quite often. Sorry; I'm getting off topic.

Just briefly, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit was one of the first items that we introduced when this session started. It's Bill 2. I listened carefully—as finance critic, the goal of the critic is to criticize or point out any failings or shortcomings of this bill. We are here to defend the bill; the government is here. I just want to say a few points about the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. It does help seniors stay in their homes longer. If they renovate their homes, they can get up to \$1,500 for expenses that are related to a permanent modification of their home.

I think also there are a few other things this government has done—a lot of things this government has done—to support seniors. I only have a little bit of time, but we have enhancements to energy and property tax credits for seniors, and seniors can get a maximum credit of \$1,025 annually. There's also the Ontario senior homeowners' property tax grant. The maximum grant was doubled in 2010 to \$500, as announced in the 2008 budget. That's another way of helping seniors. There's the Ontario sales tax credit, an annual—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I want to thank the member for Beaches–East York for his comments and telling the government that they definitely have to look at that owl for that wisdom. We'll see whether, over the course of this term, they're going to follow that.

I wanted to touch upon a couple of points that were raised throughout this debate. This is going to involve a \$10,000 commitment on the part of seniors, those over 65, to retain the \$1,500 tax credit. Now, I know that in talking to seniors, going door to door during the campaign, they always talked about the fact that their main concerns were about how they're going to actually stay in their homes—not by a ramp that might be built, not by a lift that might be installed, but by the fact that their taxes have gone up, the fact that their property taxes have gone up.

Someone has to actually have the \$10,000 to be able to take the tax credit. Not a lot of people who are seniors on fixed incomes have a disposable amount of \$10,000 that they can put into home renovations to retain this tax credit. That's why I think that our proposal, the proposal by the member for Algoma–Manitoulin in his bill last week, to reduce the HST on home heating, benefits everybody, not a select few. I think that if we had a choice between the two, we should be doing something that benefits the most amount of people, which is why we support the bill that was proposed by the member for Algoma–Manitoulin, and that's why we have difficulty supporting a bill that very few seniors will actually qualify for.

I think the government should understand that we are here to represent all Ontarians and that this bill and whatever we do with tax policy should reflect that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Now, I'm not the health critic, but I'm going to raise a seniors' issue under this bill that is uncomfortable—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Excuse me one second.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Oh, excuse me. I'm not—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** You had me confused there for a few seconds. The member from Welland.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you again, Speaker. I'm going to raise an issue, a health issue of seniors, that probably would be better addressed than the bill that's before us today. It's a topic that many seniors are uncomfortable speaking about but that 30% of them report being afflicted with, and that is the issue of incontinence. Both men and women—seniors, over the age of probably 60—suffer from incontinence, and it costs those seniors up to \$3,000 per year to buy incontinence products. That is a lot of money. It also increases health care costs, because if seniors don't have the money to change those products on a regular basis, they develop infections and

bed sores and rashes. Then they have to seek medical care and sometimes hospital care.

**1000**

There is a gentleman who lives in my community; his name is Jack O'Neil, and he is the president of Niagara Gatekeepers. That is an agency that kind of looks out for seniors, as a watchdog for seniors. He's asked me to bring forward this important issue and to ask the government and the Minister of Health to investigate this problem and to provide some relief, under the health portfolio, to assist seniors across the province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your recent appointment as the Deputy Speaker.

I'm very supportive of this bill, Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. When I was in my community talking to people during my campaign, there was a lot of support for this particular item in the platform. You know, it allows seniors in our communities to stay in their homes later in life, it helps families who share their homes with seniors to invest in their property to better accommodate the seniors in their homes, and also it supports over 10,000 jobs.

I know that this whole strategy—I'm very proud of this particular bill and the Liberal platform and, in addition to that, what's happened over the last eight years in regard to supporting our aging population. This is the government that's invested into the cutting of generic drug costs, which I believe is a strong indicator that it wants to make sure that this is the best province in the entire country where one can age. I think if you look through the platform, if you look at the track record of this government, you can tell easily that it's a government that truly wants to invest in making sure that we deliver on that promise.

My community, Don Valley East—and particularly Don Mills—has a higher percentage of seniors than the national or provincial average, and when I was knocking on doors, talking to people, there were different points being brought up by members of my communities. Seniors would say things like, "If we invest in our homes, we can live here longer."

The environment has a particular effect on health, and it causes less of a burden on the health care system, so I think this is a fantastic bill. I support it and I hope the other parties opposite will do the same.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Beaches–East York, you have two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I was unaware until you were congratulated. Is, in fact, this correct, that you are the new Deputy Speaker? You are. Well, congratulations, then. I wish you much success in this position, because we go back a long way, back to city of Toronto days.

In any event, to answer the members, thank you very much to the member from Scarborough Southwest and

the members from Cambridge, Welland and Don Valley East. The member from Scarborough Southwest asked a question: Why is it Beaches–East York and not The Beach–East York? It's because this is set by federal statute, and Maria Minna, who was then the MP for Beaches–East York—it used to be called Beaches–Woodbine—changed the name to reflect East York but left "Beaches" as it was. Since this province has adopted the federal boundaries, the name remains the same. Perhaps one day it will be The Beach. I'm not sure. But that is not up to me, nor even this Legislature; it is up to our federal counterparts, and maybe we'll ask MP Kellway to take a look at it.

In any event, the other members are relatively new. I had hoped that there would be some discussion on what I had to say rather than government members reiterating their support for the bill and members in the opposition talking about other issues. Really, quite frankly, I think that what needs to be said here is: Is this bill one that is going to get broad public support, in view of the economic circumstances we have and in view of the fact that there may be other programs at risk if monies are cut?

Seniors are going to have to answer that, and it behooves all of us to send this to committee, to listen very intently and carefully to what seniors want and to try to help the majority. Not the minority of seniors, who live in nice homes and want to repair them, but all of the seniors, including those 100,000 who live in poverty and those that simply don't have the economic wherewithal to benefit from this particular bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The minister has moved adjournment of the debate. Does the House agree? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** This House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

*The House recessed from 1005 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park today Georgia and Victor Braney, grandparents of page Madeline Braney, who are here from the member for Whitby–Oshawa's riding to watch their granddaughter. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I would like to welcome in advance Marnie Kloppenburg from Arva, Ontario, in my great riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, who will be joining us soon. Marnie is the mother of legislative page Lila Kloppenburg, so we'd like to say "welcome."

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to introduce and welcome Mary Gordon, the founder and president of



Roots of Empathy, who is here today to support the work we are doing to prevent bullying. Thank you, Mary.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's my pleasure today to welcome Jim and Judy Gowland, to my left. They are proud sponsors of Team Farmall. They are from Teeswater, Ontario, but more importantly, they're the aunt and uncle of page Alli.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear red ribbons in recognition of World AIDS Day. Today is the 30th anniversary of World AIDS Day. I just want to congratulate the Canadian AIDS Society; it's celebrating its 25th anniversary today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister has asked for unanimous consent. Agreed? It's agreed.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** By way of introduction, I'd like to introduce constituents of mine who are here in the visitors' gallery: Janet Vallery and Dave Hurlburt from the township of Centre Wellington.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I wish to introduce Gary Nichols, president of Nichols Gravel. He has operations in your riding, Speaker, as well as mine, and he's here to get some redress and address some issues of justice.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to introduce constituents of mine who worked on my campaign as well: Ann and Michael Parsons from Orillia.

**M. Grant Crack:** C'est un grand plaisir pour moi ce matin de présenter notre ancien député provincial de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell.

It's a great pleasure for me to introduce our former MPP who served our riding of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell so well and who was so well respected by both sides of the House: Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Indeed a very warm welcome to our former colleague. On behalf of the Speaker, I get to say thank you for being here, and welcome.

Further introductions?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** It's my great pleasure to introduce two guests of mine in the audience: Corporal Shum, who's with the 32nd Canadian service battalion, and Second Lieutenant Ju, who's with the Canadian combat engineers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions?

We have two delegations in the Speaker's gallery today as guests. Please welcome our first delegation, from the National School of Public Policy in Lahore, Pakistan, led by Mr. Naeem Aslam. The delegation is accompanied by the Consul General of Pakistan at Toronto, Mr. Sahebzada A. Khan. Welcome them, please. We're glad you're here with us. Thank you for joining us.

Our second delegation I would like to introduce—our visitors in the Speaker's gallery are hosted by the Association of Former Parliamentarians. Today in the Speaker's gallery, we have members from the Quebec Association of Former Parliamentarians: Madame Cécile Vermette, the president of the Quebec Association of Former Parliamentarians and a former MNA in the riding of Marie-

Victorin from 1985 to 2007; and Madame Marie Tanquay, the executive secretary of the Quebec Association of Former Parliamentarians. Welcome.

From the Manitoba Association of Former Parliamentarians: Ms. Linda Asper, the chairperson of the Manitoba Association of Former Parliamentarians and the MLA for the riding of Riel from 1999 to 2003; Ms. Muriel Smith, a member of the Manitoba Association of Former Parliamentarians and the former MLA for the riding of Osborne from 1985 to 1988; and Mr. Clif Evans, a member of the Manitoba Association of Former Parliamentarians and the former MLA for the riding of Interlake from 1990 to 1999.

From the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians: the Rev. Canon Derwyn Shea, the chairman of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians and the former Ontario MPP for High Park-Swansea from 1995 to 1999; Mr. Gilles Morin, the former Deputy Speaker, the vice-chair of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians and the former member for Carleton East from 1985 to 1999; and Mr. Murad Velshi, the secretary of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians and the former MPP for Don Mills from 1987 to 1990; the former MPP for Etobicoke North, Mr. John Hastings, 1995 to 2003; and the former MPP for Perth-Wellington and Deputy Speaker, Karen Haslam, 1990 to 1995.

Welcome our guests. Thank you for being here.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Such a very warm welcome to our House.

It is now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, we've brought forward a number of good ideas to help restrain runaway government spending and create jobs for the people in the province of Ontario. We've called for a public sector wage freeze to help us balance the books and preserve essential services. We've called for fixing the arbitration system to make sure that agreements are in line with the ability of families to pay. And we've called for modernizing the apprenticeship system to create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades. We're observing over there, Mr. Premier, that you have Don Drummond giving you advice from one side and you have Patrick Dillon, who has opposed all three of our ideas, on the other.

I guess it's fair to say that Mr. Dillon is the one who's calling the shots. Why else would you oppose our three good ideas?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I always appreciate the opportunity to respond to my honourable colleague's questions.

I want to introduce a new piece of information here which I think will be illuminating. Here is a quotation: "We have an upcoming, looming shortage of skilled tradespeople in the province, and I see the college having a very big role to play in the promotion of skilled trades to young people." That statement was made by Ron Johnson, former Conservative Party MPP and chair of the Ontario College of Trades.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Okay, so Ron Johnson is calling the shots; it's not Patrick Dillon after all. Now we understand. But do you know what? It should be the Premier calling the shots. It should be the cabinet making the decisions.

1040

Premier, not too long ago I met with a young man named Ryan who desperately wanted to be an electrician. He even had a job lined up with an employer in Cornwall, but he couldn't get the position because of your outdated apprenticeship system. Basically, the ratios meant that his employer couldn't hire him. So he got a part-time job working in the warehouse at Walmart. He's at least earning a cheque and paying the bills, but it's not what he wanted to do.

I'm going to stand with Ryan. I'm going to stand with those young people who want to get jobs in the province today. You stand with Patrick Dillon and his associates who spent \$9 million in attack ads against the PCs. Premier, will you do the right thing and help people like Ryan get jobs as electricians, as plumbers and as HVAC operators?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** If my honourable colleague is genuinely interested in helping us create more jobs, then he'll support our Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit which, among other things, is going to create, on an annual basis, 10,500 jobs for construction trades. I'd ask him to support that initiative that is before this House at present.

On the matter of the college, again, I would implore my honourable colleague to have faith and confidence in the new College of Trades. It is something that we have established to inspire confidence among all Ontarians, but especially in our young people and in our families, so they see the trades as a viable alternative career for themselves.

Again, I want to bring to my colleague's attention that the college is evenly divided between representatives of employers and employees and is chaired by a former Conservative MPP.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, Premier, let me bring something to your attention, then. Walter Pamic, from the Ontario Electrical League, a group of small and medium-sized businesses, says about your determination to keep the trades in the 1970s, "To be frank, there is no justification for Ontario's current three to one apprenticeship

ratios. It's not a matter of safety. It's not a matter of a lack of work. It's politics—plain and simple." And we understand that. We understand your cozy, incestuous, you-scratch-my-back-I-scratch-yours relationship with Patrick Dillon and his special interests.

But if we have a spending crisis in the province of Ontario, if we have a jobs crisis in the province of Ontario, it's time for you to stand up and act like a Premier. Say no to Patrick Dillon; say yes to Ryan and the young people who want jobs in the province of Ontario. Will you do the right thing and say no to the special interests?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, you will not be surprised to hear that I don't see it that way.

Under the previous Conservative government, they refused to change any of the ratios. On our watch, we have changed eight ratios. Now we have put in place an independent, arm's-length college. Its responsibility: It has been specifically mandated to review 34 ratios during the coming year, 2012.

I say it again to my honourable colleague: We should have confidence in the college. It may be headed up by a Conservative, but I have confidence in its objectivity. It is evenly divided between employers and employees. Nonetheless, we should have confidence in our college.

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier—of course, just like employers across the province, we don't have confidence in the fixed deck that you have at the College of Trades. You basically sold it off to special interests. I understand that.

Let me ask you another question about confidence, Premier. Eighty municipalities, representing two million people in the province of Ontario, have called for a restoration of local decision-making when it comes to massive industrial wind farms that you're putting across the province like pins in a pin cushion.

Premier, you've said that you've listened. You've said that you got the message in the last campaign. Will you do the right thing and support the bill, standing in the name of Mr. Smith, the member for Prince Edward-Hastings, and restore local decision-making like the 80 municipalities have called for?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question. It is indeed a very important issue. What we have set out to do here in Ontario is to seize an exciting new opportunity in renewable technologies and clean energy. We're now at the forefront in all of North America in terms of the pace at which we are proceeding to build up this new sector. We have created 20,000 new jobs so far, we received some \$26 billion in new investment in the province of Ontario and we now have clean air. In fact, my honourable colleague will shortly be announcing the closure of two more of our coal-fired plants.

So that's what we're talking about here. It's a very big undertaking. We're not claiming that we have it perfect, but we're absolutely committed to ensuring that we have in place the kind of structure that makes sure that we can



continue to grow and create jobs and continue to clean up our air.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, nobody believes your fictions anymore when it comes to these jobs that last only as long as their rich subsidies.

But let's get back to the essence of the question that you skipped over. Later today, Mayor April Jeffs of the township of Wainfleet and Mayor Doug Joyner from the township of West Lincoln will be here, as well as hundreds of other families from across the province of Ontario. Mayor Jeffs and Mayor Joyner oppose that you're bringing in the largest industrial wind farm in the entire province in West Niagara and the Glanbrook area as well.

Premier, will you look Mayor Jeffs in the eyes and will you look Mayor Joyner in the eyes and tell them that Dalton McGuinty knows better what's good for their community than they themselves do and than the people they represent do? Or will you say, "Yes, we'll support Mr. Smith's bill and restore local decision-making when it comes to these massive industrial wind farm projects"?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, what I will say is that we will not waver in our commitment to continue to upload \$500 million in costs which were downloaded onto Ontario municipalities by the previous Conservative government.

We've uploaded \$1 billion so far; we have half a billion dollars to go. We will not let our municipalities down, as my honourable colleague proposed to do in his platform.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, the incredible arrogance of the McGuinty government: He says, "We will not waver," "We will not listen," "We will not care," "We will not listen to local people from across the province of Ontario," because Dalton McGuinty believes he knows best.

John Wilkinson is no longer here. Leona Dombrowsky is no longer here. Carol Mitchell, Maria Van Bommel, Rick Johnson, Lou Rinaldi and Pat Hoy did not stand up for their constituents; they didn't do the right thing. I'm proud to say that now Conservative members represent each and every one of those constituents, standing up for local residents, saying no, saying, "Restore local decision-making."

That same song and dance cost you all these members, Premier. Have you heard the message? Do you get the music? Will you actually do the right thing and restore local decision-making and let local neighbours have their—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To return to the matter at hand: No, I cannot support the initiative put forward by my honourable colleague, because in truth, it would spell the end of a very important public policy, an initiative that is broadly supported by the people of Ontario, and

that is that we find a way to move off dirty coal and find a way to seize exciting economic opportunities in renewable technology.

If there is another way that we might explore to ensure that we strike a proper balance, I am open to that, Speaker. But the proposal put forward by my honourable colleague would introduce so much uncertainty and create such a patchwork when it comes to securing investment in our province that it would run counter to the determination expressed by all Ontarians.

The final comment I'll make, Speaker, is that the single greatest source of applicants for initiatives in the feed-in tariff program comes from rural Ontario.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question goes to the Premier. In these difficult times, I would submit that the government needs to focus on the challenging times that are facing families: making life more affordable, creating more jobs and improving our health care system. But the Premier insists that we simply can't afford these measures. Why does he believe, though, that we can afford massive tax cuts to corporations?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, in fact, I say to my honourable colleague—and of course I'm pleased to receive the question—that we are trying to bring a very deliberate and balanced and responsible approach to dealing with our finances. That includes our Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. That does provide benefit to our families in their homes.

We're responding to a demand made by seniors for a long time now. They're saying, "If at all possible, we'd like to live out the remainder of our lives, or as much of our lives as possible, in our homes." So we're going to create a tax credit, it's up to \$1,500 every year, to allow seniors to make renovations to their homes to make them more user-friendly, safe and accessible. At the same time, Speaker, that will add \$800 million in economic activity to us on an annual basis and create some 10,500 jobs.

So I say to my honourable colleague that it's a specific measure designed to help families in their homes.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Premier says we can't afford relief for families to take the HST off of home heating but he insists that the biggest banks do need a break in this province. Quarterly profits at CIBC soared 59% today, to \$800 million. You know, that's over \$6,000 a minute in profits. That's good news for the bank, Speaker, but does the Premier really think that they're the ones that need a tax break?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, the banks are always a fun target, but they do employ over 400,000 people in the GTA. They're the only sector that continued to grow throughout the recession.

Speaker, the other thing I want to mention is that we have put in place an Ontario Child Benefit. We have put in place a Clean Energy Benefit, Speaker. We do want to



move ahead, both with our Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit and we want to reduce tuition for Ontario students. These are all good examples of specific measures designed to help people in their homes, and I would ask my honourable colleague to give some consideration to supporting the new initiatives that we're introducing here to help families in their homes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, Toronto Dominion Bank also reported quarterly earnings. In three months, that bank earned \$1.6 billion, an increase of 58%. So just that we're clear, that's about \$12,000 a minute. Again, excellent news for the bank, excellent news for the shareholders, but do they really need another tax cut?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I think we're pretty lucky that Canadian banks headquartered in Ontario are recognized as the strongest banks in the world. I think that's a pretty good thing. I think the fact that they employ hundreds of thousands of Ontarians is also a good thing.

But having said that, Speaker, we've been working hard as a government to strike a balance in terms of supports we lend to growth in our business sector and support for our families. I say again to my honourable colleague: There are two specific initiatives that we are going to bring in this Legislature. One is already on the floor, and that is our determination to put in place a Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit to help families in their homes. Beyond that, Speaker, we want to reduce tuition by 30% for our families. We think these are important, practical, pragmatic, sensible initiatives, and we're finding the money from within.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Back to the Premier. I hate to burst the Premier's bubble; profits are soaring in the financial sector but employment is not. In fact, Statistics Canada reports that there are 20,000 fewer jobs, fewer people working in the financial sector this year. So why, Speaker—it begs the question—why do we continue to cut taxes for companies that are recording record profits and shedding jobs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm going to encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at the experience of the government of Manitoba. Speaker, they cut corporate taxes in 2003; then they cut them in 2004. They cut them again in 2005, then they cut them in 2006, then they cut them in 2007, then they cut them in 2008 and then they cut them in 2009, all with a view to ensuring that we bring a balanced approach to our competitiveness. I wouldn't be surprised if they also married that with supports for families, but I encourage my honourable colleague to take a lesson from our next-door-neighbour NDP government, where we bring a balanced, thoughtful approach. We want to make sure our businesses are competitive so they create more jobs while we provide opportunities for our families for supports in their homes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the banking sector is the single largest recipient of the Premier's corporate tax giveaways. By 2013, the province will be handing that sector over half a billion dollars each and every year. How can the Premier tell families that he cannot afford to take the HST off of home heating while giving banks making \$12,000 a minute a tax break?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I want to remind my honourable colleague that we have in place an Ontario Clean Energy Benefit. It is valued at about four times the value of the proposition put forward by my honourable colleague. Her proposal costs some \$350 million.

We have a different choice. Our choice, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit—not only does it cost less, not only have we found the money from within, but it will create 10,500 jobs, it will create \$800 million in economic activity in the province of Ontario and it will relieve pressure when it comes to the health care budget as we help families stay on in their homes for a longer period of time. That's the choice that we are making as a government. We're comfortable with that choice and we think it's in keeping with the balanced approach, the steady-handed approach that Ontarians want us to take.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, more banks are going to be reporting their earnings over the next couple of days, and analysts are expecting the exact same results across the board: higher revenues, higher profits.

How can the Premier tell families, on the one hand, that they have to expect cuts from everything from child care to health care—something that Manitoba is not doing, by the way—while at the same time this Premier is saying that they're okay to make record profits and give them huge tax cuts? Because that's the priority of this government: tax cuts to banks, not services for families like child care and decent health care.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'll remind my honourable colleague that in our 2010 budget we put out a pretty dramatic package of tax reforms. That included about \$5 billion in reductions for our businesses, but it was complemented by \$12 billion in reductions for Ontarians themselves, for families. It includes 93% of Ontarians, who now have a permanent tax cut. Families are receiving an average of \$355 less by way of income tax that they're paying this year and every year going forward. Some 90,000 people will no longer pay personal income tax in the province of Ontario because of the changes that we have made.

Again, I remind her of our Ontario Child Benefit: It's \$1,100 per child; a support like this does not exist in any other province. We put it here in Ontario to help our most needy families.

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier has already said today that he won't listen to rural Ontario, so let me try the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.



Minister, this afternoon, my private member's bill, Bill 10, the Local Municipality Democracy Act, 2011, will receive second reading. This bill will restore to Ontario municipalities the local planning control that was stripped from them by amendments your government made to the Planning Act.

Municipal councillors, mayors and the people they were elected to represent are demanding a say when developers propose an industrial wind factory in their community. Your government shut them out of the planning process. I'm asking you today, Minister: Will you support the bill that's being presented this afternoon that will give them their voice back?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I can't tell you how happy I am to have this question from the member opposite, because we are a government that—actually, one of the tenets of our term has been to restore the relationship between the provincial government and municipal governments. That's what we're about. Many of us are here because of the complete disarray of that relationship before 2003, between amalgamation and downloading of services—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** This isn't the moment in which things get quiet to interject.

Minister?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know that for many of the members opposite, this is a painful reminder of years when there was such friction and such conflict between the provincial government and the municipal governments. We believe that that's not the way that provincial government and municipal governments should operate. The municipal government is a level of government that has—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

1100

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Minister, you can't pass the buck on this one. We on this side of the House already know where the Minister of Energy stands. He doesn't support treating municipalities as true partners, and that's why your government lost so many seats in rural Ontario.

It's your job to represent those councils, some 80, that have passed resolutions asking for the powers back that Mr. Smith's bill will provide. They deserve as much respect in the planning process for massive wind or solar projects as they do for any other type of development, and you know that.

Don't hide from the issue, Minister. I'm asking you: Why won't you do the right thing and stand up for local democracy by supporting this legislation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, it's almost irresistible for me to resist the urge to think about the days when I was sitting in that gallery, fighting for some respect for the voice of the local democratic municipal governments in this province when hospitals were being closed, when cities were being amalgamated, when—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. It was relatively quiet to ask the question; I'd like to hear the answer.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do not need the interjections now.

Minister?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make two final points.

I think the members opposite know that it is mandatory under the renewable energy approvals process for proponents to consult with municipalities. It is mandatory.

Secondly, as the Premier has already said today, what we will do is what the party opposite did not commit to do: We will continue to upload the services that were downloaded by that government when they had the opportunity—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. We did such a good job yesterday. One moment, please. I did hear a few very-close-to-personal comments to individual members. I really do want you to resist that. If you've got a comment to make, make it about policy. I do resent any member being accused of being anything but honourable in this place.

## ABORIGINAL HOUSING

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Minister, you'll know that there are people in Attawapiskat today, at 17 below zero, living in tents and backyard sheds—something that Ontarians and Canadians should never stand for.

We watched with horror yesterday the federal government say, "The solution is to blame the community. It's all their fault." They're trying to accuse the community of not being able to manage the money, and, quite frankly, that flies in the face of reality. The community's problem is one of policy on the part of this federal government, of underfunding and also inaction on the part of the federal government.

So I have a simple question to the Ontario government: Does Ontario support the federal government in blaming this community?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think that blame in this situation produces no good result. What I have been doing for the last week is talking to the chiefs who are involved. I actually did talk to the federal minister last week, working with my colleague in MCSCS to make sure that Emergency Management Ontario and our officials from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs were on the ground. We were there as of Monday morning and we have been working as part of a team. We're now aware that there are some remedies that we can work on in terms of helping people to move into some of the structures that are in better shape.

But Mr. Speaker, the long-term solution is not going to be found unless First Nations, the federal government and the provincial government work together, and the federal government has a responsibility—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, Minister, meanwhile people stay in tents and people stay in backyards. My question to you was this, and I'm a little bit hopeful in the answer that you gave: that what we have is the blame game going on, and at the end of the day people are still in tents and people are still in backyards. My question to you is a really simple one. Is the province prepared to do the heavy lifting that needs to be done in order to stand shoulder to shoulder with the community to take on the federal government so that we can actually get them to do what needs to be done, and we take our responsibilities as well?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We are, right now, standing shoulder to shoulder with the First Nations. We are there. There are provincial officials on the ground. They are working with the community to do everything that we can do to respond to the crisis.

It is the easiest thing in the world for this whole situation to devolve into a fight. That is the easiest way out. That is the path of least resistance, to point fingers and blame and distract from the issue, which is that there are layered and complex problems that affect the lives of children and men and women living in these isolated communities. Attawapiskat is not the only community; it is not the only situation that needs attention.

What I'm saying to my officials is, where are the other issues? Where are the concerns that are going to come forward as winter sets in?

We've got to work with the federal government. We've got to make sure that we hold their feet to the fire—absolutely. But as a nation, we have to take responsibility—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, yesterday you introduced anti-bullying legislation. As a former school board trustee representing Don Valley East, I know first-hand how pervasive bullying is and how tough it is to eradicate.

I'm so pleased that all parties in this House agree that something needs to be done. We're all aware of the heartbreaking stories of kids taking their own lives in part because of bullying they face from their peers. And we know this is an issue that we have to pull together to support—political leaders, schools, parents, teachers and kids. But legislation alone will not end bullying in our schools. Minister, what additional steps are you taking to change the culture in Ontario schools so they can become accepting schools?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you to the member for Don Valley East for that question. I was also very proud to be in this House as all members across took a stand on ensuring that Ontario schools would be accepting schools.

But, Mr. Speaker, the member is exactly right. Legislation alone is not the solution. That is why I was so pleased this morning to announce that the Accepting Schools Act is just one part of a comprehensive action plan to combat bullying. This plan will include a public awareness campaign to engage every Ontarian in standing up against bullying. We'll seek the advice of experts to ensure that resources in our schools for parents and for the community are the right ones. We will be establishing an Accepting Schools expert panel. We'll be reaching out to those with knowledge about curriculum and Ontario's curriculum council to report back on strengthening equity and inclusive education, and we will look to the Children's Mental Health Strategy funding of \$257 million over the next few years to support students in schools.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Speaker, I thank the minister for her response. I'm so proud to be part of a government that is working to make things better for children when it comes to bullying. I'm proud to be a member of this Legislative Assembly. I think this is an issue that we all agree on.

Minister, many of the devastating stories we've heard about bullying have to do with homophobia. In 2011, a national climate survey by Egale found that 64% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents felt unsafe in schools. This is unacceptable. I am proud that our Premier spoke directly to kids who suffered from this type of discrimination in his It Gets Better video.

Minister, what would the Accepting Schools Act do to combat bullying for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students in our schools?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Speaker, those statistics are haunting, the statistics that my colleague has put to this Legislature.

We know that student-led organizations give LGBTQ students and their allies the space to feel safe. They're a critically important part of making our schools accepting. That's why we are being absolutely clear in legislation that, if passed, any student who would like to form an organization to promote respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name "gay-straight alliance" or another name, must be supported by their board and school to do so.

I'm listening to experts like Jeremy Dias, the founder of Jer's Vision, who says, "By working with boards to provide a Rainbow Alliance, GSA or other similar group, the province is ensuring students will get the support they need."

It's about the support to students, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we are focusing on.



1110

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, last session your government passed Bill 119. This bill will raise WSIB rates on contractors and force them to insure secretaries and office managers as if they were the ones working on the construction sites. These employers have told us that in these tough economic times, they will have to lay off workers or close up shop entirely, because the cost of doing business is just too high. We are in the midst of a job crisis, and the construction sector is getting slammed.

Premier, you still have not proclaimed this bill. Will you put the construction industry at ease by committing to repeal this job-killing legislation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm pleased to answer a question from my critic on the issue. This government believes in taking into account the needs of Ontario's workers and our businesses. Bill 119 was passed back in November 2008. It amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to extend mandatory WSIB coverage to independent operators, sole proprietors, partners in a partnership and executive officers of a corporation carrying on business in construction.

The legislation will improve health and safety in the construction industry and reduce underground economic activity. The underground economy puts our economy and businesses at a competitive disadvantage and denies Ontario revenues to support our critical public services, such as health care and education.

With this legislation, Ontario will be better equipped to prevent workplace accidents and diseases and in our efforts to combat the underground economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Back to the Premier—because, Premier, the Ontario PCs have made it clear since you introduced this bill that it would kill jobs and raise taxes, but you didn't care. Despite opposition from all quarters, you passed Bill 119, but you still haven't proclaimed it into law. The Ministry of Labour says that Bill 119 will come into effect January 1, 2012. In a letter that you wrote to the CFIB, you said that it would come into effect sometime in 2012. Yet the Office of the Employer Adviser claims that Bill 119 won't come into effect until January 1, 2013.

Premier, why won't you just fess up, be honest and give us a straight answer, so at least these contractors can pre-order a large stack of pink slips for their employees?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Our legislation will come into effect in 2012. The three-year passage between the passage of Bill 119 and the proclamation is allowing the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to work with our construction stakeholders, to assess and to develop the necessary policies, systems and administrative process

needed to implement the amendments and the related regulations.

In preparation of the anticipated coming into force of amendments in 2012, the WSIB consulted with our stakeholders to develop new policies and, as well, systems to implement the legislative amendments. We listened to people's concerns and provided exemptions based on those conversations. We want to help small family businesses run, where one family member provides office work, where only one executive officer of a corporation or one partner does not perform construction work. We tried to provide those exemptions. We listened to our stakeholders and took the time—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### HEALTH PROMOTION

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Yesterday, the Chief Medical Officer of Health tabled her report. Dr. King's report is clear: The rate of chronic disease, obesity and cancer will not be reversed until we develop a healthy public policy. That means a health promotion lens across every ministry, every policy, every program and every service.

Speaker, as our Chief Medical Officer of Health is sounding the alarm on health promotion, why did the Premier get rid of the Ministry of Health Promotion?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the report from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. Dr. King has been a long and strong advocate for addressing the social determinants of health, for addressing prevention, so that people actually don't get sick. We do have an aging population. It's more important than ever that people stay healthy as long as possible.

Speaker, we actually had some good news this week. We saw that the incidence of smoking amongst our young people has come down dramatically, by 25% in the past two years.

We are seeing progress on some fronts. On others, the success is not so promising. Our rates of childhood obesity indicate that we have a serious problem now and in the future. That's why our government, in the election, committed to tackling childhood obesity. Our target is to reduce the number—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Back to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to quote from Dr. King, who says that it is time to shift our focus from health care to prevention. She writes that the greatest threats to health in our society are obesity, tobacco and alcohol abuse, and she talks about poverty reduction—all things that have very little to do with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and all have to do with health promotion.

If you want to save money, if you want to save medicare, we need to take actions today. Instead, Mr. Speaker,

what did the Premier do? He eliminated the very ministry that could do this. He eliminated the Ministry of Health Promotion.

Again to the Premier: Why did you eliminate the Ministry of Health Promotion?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** From my perspective, bringing health promotion into the Ministry of Health is absolutely the right thing to do because we need to focus more on prevention. We need to see prevention, early intervention, as part of the continuum of care. That will keep people healthier.

Our government has a strong history of working collaboratively across ministries. Our poverty reduction strategy involved people from many different ministries. Our Mental Health And Addictions Strategy, as the member opposite knows, involves contributions from many ministries.

We must work collaboratively to achieve the healthiest population we possibly can. In fact, we aspire to Ontario becoming the healthiest place to grow up and grow old in.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy. This fall, many of my constituents were concerned about the instability injected into Ontario's clean energy economy due to the opposition's constant rant about ripping up the Green Energy Act. Clean energy is helping to replace dirty coal-fired plants, cleaning up the air, protecting the health of Ontarians and reducing our province's environmental footprint. This means that our children and grandchildren have a prosperous future.

In my riding of Peterborough, people want to ensure that the benefits of clean energy are around not only for the next two or three years but also for the next 20 to 30 years. Minister, what is being done to ensure that Ontario's green energy program is sustainable and prosperous for the long term for all Ontarians?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member from Peterborough is absolutely right: Ontarians have made a lot of progress cleaning up the air since 2003. We're almost 90% out of coal, and the green energy initiatives and the Green Energy Act are driving that; they're really driving it.

We want to make sure that the clean air, the jobs and the investment that go along with the Green Energy Act are sustainable in the medium and the long term. We've launched a review of our approach over the past two years with a view to strengthening it, getting input where we need further input, making sure that we have the smoothest approach possible to hooking up these projects, and making sure we have a firm foundation for jobs in all communities and investment coming into the province of Ontario in the years to come. It is the right thing to do for today and for our children tomorrow and in the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Minister. I know that our Green Energy Act is helping farmers and rural Ontarians to make money off of clean energy while helping us to get off dirty coal-fired generation.

The Green Energy Act has brought millions of dollars of private investment to Ontario and made the province a global leader in green manufacturing. But all of this is at risk because of the opposition's private member's bill. I'm concerned that this bill will signal that Ontario is not a place to invest, and I'm concerned that it will deprive farmers and rural Ontarians of the means to earn extra money off their land, leading to decisions being made by the Ontario Municipal Board upon appeal.

My constituents believe in our clean energy economy and the jobs and investment they have created. Minister, can you tell us what the impact of the feed-in tariff review will have on Ontario's green energy economy?

1120

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Well, the member is right. Many thousands of these green energy applications and contracts are from rural Ontario. Thousands of jobs and millions of dollars of investment are flowing into rural Ontario from the green energy initiative at a time when every part of Ontario is anxious for more investment and more jobs. The feed-in tariff will make sure that we have a strong foundation for the future.

We don't want to burden any community or business with process, procedures, extra steps and extra costs. We want an approach where we can tell people that they can or can't, early on. We want an approach which signals to the investment community that Ontario is a great place to land jobs and investment. And we want an approach which will continue to clean up the air and protect the health of Ontarians today and into the future.

## HYDRO TRANSMISSION

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, the Ontario Power Authority was created by your government as a transitional agency. But not only have the OPA costs grown by a whopping 465% in the last five short years; now these Queen's Park bureaucrats are making job-killing decisions that are jeopardizing Ontario's rural families.

Earlier this week, we heard the finance minister commit to reviewing the Leamington transmission line project, which the OPA cancelled after three years of preparation. In jeopardy are the 2,300 construction jobs and the 1,000 permanent private sector jobs.

I ask the minister, why are you allowing these faceless OPA bureaucrats to continue to waste money and make decisions—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Thank you very much, Speaker. You know, we want to make sure that Ontarians have the power they need where individuals or businesses need it, that it's safe and reliable and that it's



clean, and we've been doing a lot of work the last eight years.

The party opposite, when they were in power, let generation lapse and we had an increasingly unreliable system, so we've greatly increased generation and we've been repairing and modernizing the very transmission system that he speaks of. The people who have been hard at work at this—OPA, Hydro One and others—take a look at issues such as down in Leamington. We want to get the best advice from those businesses that want to bring on jobs—and many of them will be clean energy jobs—so that we can land the investment, we can land the jobs. We'll be working with the community on the real business prospects here.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex has been hit hard by job losses; certainly one of the hardest-hit areas in the province. The Leamington transmission line project was supposed to be completed in 2013 and bring desperately-needed jobs for families in my riding. Yet, the minister allowed these faceless Toronto bureaucrats at the OPA to cancel this project three years in.

Minister, your fondness for review—I hold in my hand an email from the OPA stating that they will not be moving forward with this project. I would ask page Lila to deliver this to the minister.

The families of Leamington don't need—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister of Energy.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. When I stand, you sit down.

Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Thank you, and I want to thank the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex for his question—a very important question. The Minister of Finance raised this issue about the transmission with me and spoke to me very directly. I know he's having discussions with the people from Hydro One and the OPA as well. My expectation is that wherever there are job opportunities, we take the realistic economic look to find out what they are and make sure that those get the power they need.

Jobs are invested in the Green Energy Act, which the others are going to put an end to if their bill ever gets passed this afternoon. Jobs are invested in the southwest economic development fund, which the side opposite has said that they're not going to support.

It's time to stop talking about the possibility of jobs and start supporting the jobs that are all over rural communities and will come into Chatham-Kent-Essex, will come into Essex and will come into southwestern Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question is to the Premier. Essex county is concerned about being able to fund their

doctor recruitment program after Windsor decided to pull the funding. The county says they're experiencing a shortage of doctors, with 1.2 doctors for every thousand, compared to Ontario's average of 1.8.

The province needs to be involved in recruiting doctors to underserved communities, Speaker, so my question is: Why is the Premier ignoring the doctor shortage in Essex county and other Ontario communities?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, this government is doing anything but ignoring the doctor shortage. In fact, 2.1 million more people, according to the OMA, are now attached to primary care physicians than when we took office. The fact that we've got more doctors working means more people are getting access to primary care. We're proud of the progress we've made.

There are still parts of the province where access to primary care is not sufficient. There are other parts of the province where, actually, we've got doctors looking for patients instead of patients looking for doctors.

We've made tremendous progress, and I'm more than happy to hear more about what's happening in this particular community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, according to the county warden, some area doctors in the region have 6,000 patients. I think they're actually looking for more doctors, not the other way around.

The Windsor Regional Hospital CEO says he's worried about the situation, and he says, "Right now the situation is stable, but it would take very little"—very little—"for it to start going backwards."

During the election campaign, New Democrats proposed a plan to recruit doctors to underserved communities like Essex and others. When will we see the Premier's plan to bring doctors to underserved communities like Essex?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, we have made tremendous progress: 3,400 more doctors are working in this province now than in 2003; by 2013, we will have doubled the number of new doctors who are ready to practise every year. We've made tremendous progress: 200 family health teams and 25 nurse practitioner clinics, including one in Essex.

We've made terrific progress. More to do, of course, but we're on it.

#### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. My constituents watched the excitement as our athletes competed in the recent Pan and Parapan Am Games in Guadalajara. Our athletes gave their all and made our country proud by bringing home 182 medals, including 43 gold medals.

Excitement is building again as we look ahead to hosting the 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto. A lot of work has to be done to prepare to host this huge event; that means new jobs and more economic activity. Minis-

ter, how will Ontario's economy benefit from hosting the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'd like to thank the member for the question. Our government is very excited to host the Americas at the 2015 Pan and Parapan Am Games in Toronto, and I appreciate his concern regarding Ontario's economy. After the worst global recession in a generation, growing the economy and creating jobs is a top priority for our government.

The member is correct: hosting the games will provide a significant economic boost for Ontario. Experts estimate it will create 15,000 new jobs directly related to the games and many more spin-off jobs in the construction industry, hospitality, retail and tourism sectors. It will trigger investment of more than \$700 million in new and existing sport and recreation infrastructure; attract 250,000 tourists, along with their money spent in our economy; and showcase the province internationally as a great place to invest and conduct business.

1130

Mr. Speaker, we're all working very hard to deliver a great event, one that enables job creation and economic growth.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the next four years, the work to get ready for the games will be a great source of new jobs for people in Ontario and in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River, which is next door to where the pool will be built.

But we also need to plan for the future. The games offer the tremendous opportunity to develop our local infrastructure and to benefit our communities for generations to come. After 2015's games have come and gone, what will be the lasting impact on Toronto and other communities, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you again for the question. The member raises an excellent point. As we develop the facilities and infrastructure for the games, we must also ensure that our investments will continue to pay off.

Take the athletes' village in the West Don Lands. It will become home to approximately 10,000 athletes and team officials during the 2015 Pan Am Games. Following the games, the athletes' village will become a new mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly community that will revitalize the West Don Lands and Toronto's waterfront.

It will also include a multi-use facility with access to sport and recreation, as well as much-needed student and low-income housing. As well, this project brings new jobs and economic growth, but also long-term benefits through revitalization and new assets to the local community. It is just one example of the exciting opportunities gained by hosting the games, and our government is pleased to continue to work hard to deliver these kinds of projects in advance of the Pan Am Games.

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. I have two of my municipalities in Haliburton–

Kawartha Lakes–Brock, the city of Kawartha Lakes and the municipality of Cavan Monaghan, that have both passed resolutions to restore local autonomy in respect to the renewable energy projects. One of the industrial wind turbine projects would be erected in the Oak Ridges moraine.

Minister, do you support erecting a 40-storey wind turbine in the protected Oak Ridges moraine?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I thank the member for the question. We have a province-wide approach to renewable energy projects, which help clean up the air and bring in investment and jobs; a province-wide approach which requires input from municipalities, requires a number of environmental and related assessments and requires consultation, including public consultations.

These approaches and procedures need to be conducted in order to get the best input, and then decisions will be made by the Ministry of the Environment on the right approach.

We're conducting a review right now to see whether we can strengthen the approach, whether we can get additional input, but we're not going to waver from the requirement. There needs to be a strong, province-wide approach so we can clean up the air, bring in the investment and locate the jobs, many of which are in rural Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary? The member from Huron–Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Speaker, I find it hard to believe that the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Energy continue to be out of touch and ignore the positions taken by municipal councils across this province.

For instance, in Port Elgin, the council of Saugeen Shores has objected to the CAW industrial wind turbine because it does not comply with the rules you created, meaning the 550-metre setback.

Residents in my riding of Huron–Bruce want to know why you're allowing the CAW turbine to be exempted from the rules that you created. The rules you created—you're ignoring them now.

So my question is: When will you do the right thing and start listening to the 80 municipalities that have passed resolutions for an immediate moratorium?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Thank you. When we brought in the Green Energy Act, we heard that there should be a province-wide approach to the location of green energy initiatives. We heard that from many. We heard it from municipalities, we heard it from individuals and we heard it from those who were looking to invest in the province of Ontario.

Now, if there are ways to improve this, if there are ways to strengthen it, if there are ways to get further input, we'd like to do that. This is a very exciting, evolutionary initiative. It has located over 20,000 jobs, direct and indirect, in Ontario and \$26 billion worth of investment. We want that to continue because we need it. But what we can't have is an investment climate which depends on different resolutions by different councils or



communities at different times, because that will never attract—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My question is to the Acting Premier. The Wahgoshig First Nation has repeatedly expressed concern about the lack of consultation regarding the activities of Solid Gold Resources on their traditional lands. Your own ministry, in a letter on November 8, has stated: “The ministry continues to believe that consultation to date regarding your exploration program has been inadequate given concerns that the WFN has raised about potential impacts on its aboriginal and treaty rights, and we must repeat our earlier request that Solid Gold suspend its drilling program immediately.” The ministry said that.

The First Nation is here today, protesting and forced to launch court proceedings because the company refused the ministry’s request. My question is simple: Is the government actually going to fulfill its obligations, or is it just rhetoric on a piece of paper?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Thank you very much for the question. Speaker, we take our duty to consult very, very seriously. We understand that in order to achieve that which is possible, we cannot do that in isolation, without any of the partners, with regard to mining. So in short, the answer is that duty to consult is paramount. We believe in that. We have a ministry that is dedicated to that, and we will continue to ensure that everyone understands the importance of the duty to consult.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Minister, by ignoring First Nations at the outset of the exploration process, the government is, in fact, slowing down mine development.

Once again, from November 8: “The crown is obligated to ensure that adequate consultation occurs.”

My simple question is, why are they still drilling?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** As part of the modernization of the Mining Act, we ensured that we inform any company of their duty to ensure that they have meaningful consultations with First Nations. We will continue to ensure that the modernization of the Mining Act’s implicit definition that duty to consult be adhered to takes place.

### AIDS TREATMENT

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. One of the most significant events during our lifetime has been the spread of HIV/AIDS and how it has affected millions of people across our planet.

Speaker, today is the 23rd annual World AIDS Day. I think we can all agree that the elimination of HIV/AIDS

is of the utmost importance, and World AIDS Day is a great way to raise awareness of the struggle against this challenging virus.

In Ontario alone, this disease still affects far too many of our citizens. More than 26,000 Ontarians are living with HIV/AIDS in Ontario, and we see an estimated 1,600 new infections every year. We are fortunate that the treatment of the disease has improved immeasurably these past decades, but there’s so much more to do.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister tell us what the government is doing to support people living with AIDS in Ontario and how we are working to help prevent its spread to more Ontarians?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for this important question.

Today is World AIDS Day. Thirty years ago, the first patient was diagnosed with AIDS. Today is a day when we take time to remember those who have lost their lives due to AIDS. It’s also a time to look forward, to look at the progress we have made and to share our hope for a better future.

As we heard, more than 26,000 Ontarians are living with HIV/AIDS today, with an estimated 1,600 new infections every year. About 30% of people are in fact undiagnosed. That’s why we’re working very hard with the AIDS Bureau to support a large number of programs and initiatives targeted towards gay men, injection drug users, African, Caribbean and other populations at high risk.

Speaker, we’ve come a long way. More to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes, and I would like to ask our former parliamentarians if they miss this.

They don’t.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 o’clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I’d like to welcome to the Legislature today—they’ll be here in the public gallery a little later—residents from my riding, from Amherst Island. They’re here in support of our colleague’s bill this afternoon. They are members of Save Amherst Island and the Association to Protect Amherst Island, and I’ll just read a few of the names: Bruce and Bonnie Caughey, Janet Grace, Karen White, Hugh and Claire Jenney—quite a number of people here from Amherst Island to support this municipal restructuring—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, member. Further introductions?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Andrew Johnson, who is a constituent of mine. Welcome to the Legislature, Andrew.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## TIGER JEET SINGH FOUNDATION

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The Tiger Jeet Singh Foundation was created by world-famous wrestling ambassador and philanthropist Tiger Jeet Singh and his son Tiger Jeet Singh, Jr., to raise awareness about human suffering and to support the needs of our schools and hospitals.

For the past two years, the foundation and Troy Newton, owner of Troy's Diner in Milton, have hosted a December toy drive in support of Ontario's children. In 2009 and 2010, the toy drive donated over 10,000 toys, and we are hoping to raise even more in 2011 in support of children at Halton's Women's Place, Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, McMaster Children's Hospital and the Salvation Army.

The Tiger Jeet Singh Foundation and Troy's Diner will be hosting the 2011 Troy's Toy Drive. I'll be joining Troy's Diner and the Tiger Jeet Singh Foundation at the 2011 toy drive on December 19.

In support of Ontario's children, I would like to encourage members of this chamber and people from across Ontario to donate to this praiseworthy event. I would also like to thank Tiger, Tiger and Troy for their continued work in support of Ontario's children. Your dedication has made a difference to children in Halton and across Ontario, making Christmas a very special time both for those who give and for those who receive. Thank you.

## COMMUNITY CENTRES

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Given the uncertainty facing many community centres in the city of Toronto today, I would like to take a few minutes to address the important role that these community hubs play in our neighbourhoods.

In my riding, we have two unique institutions: Scadding Court Community Centre and Harbourfront Community Centre. Last year, Harbourfront Community Centre alone welcomed almost 350,000 visitors and offered over 1,800 programs to neighbourhood residents. This is an outstanding feat for any organization, let alone one so dependent upon grants and fundraising. Yet both the HCC and Scadding Court continue to offer these services in a proven, cost-effective way.

Incredibly, their programming is currently at risk. The proposed 10% cut to Toronto's community partnership will seriously hamper the ability of these institutions to play an important community role. There's no longer any excess to excise. Losing these centres would mean the end of vital social programs, such as after-school camps, snack programs for children, and programming for the elderly.

I urge the MPPs sitting here today, the mayor of Toronto and Toronto city councillors to recognize the inherent value of community centres. I call on the citizens of Toronto to contact their elected officials and demand better for their neighbourhoods. We cannot

afford to lose the valuable services offered by our neighbourhood centres. Thank you.

## JOURNÉE MONDIALE DU SIDA

## WORLD AIDS DAY

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** Comme un médecin et aussi un député, j'ai le plaisir aujourd'hui d'attirer l'attention de cette Assemblée à la lutte contre le VIH/SIDA. Nous devons ensemble intensifier nos efforts pour éliminer le VIH/SIDA.

As a physician and parliamentarian, I feel duty-bound to recognize in the House today the 23rd annual world-wide AIDS Day.

Today, Speaker, more than 26,000 Ontarians live with HIV, and we see an estimated 1,600 new infections every year. That's why our government remains committed to helping those living with HIV/AIDS by providing community services and supporting organizations like Casey House.

Since 1988, Casey House has provided compassionate care to those affected by HIV/AIDS. This past summer, our government gave the green light to go ahead with a major capital expansion project at Casey House. The new building will incorporate a new health program, as well as Casey House's existing in-patient, home care and outreach program. Today, Casey House cares for over 200 people each year.

We have also made it easier for such patients to receive transplanted organs. We have made a half-million-dollar investment that will give HIV-positive people a chance to receive the gift of life. In fact, Speaker, two patients have already received organs and another one has been scheduled.

I would like to offer my support and congratulations for a successful World AIDS Day campaign to all of those who have dedicated their time towards this worthy cause. Merci, monsieur le Président.

## WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I rise to discuss an issue that has become a lightning rod for concerned citizens across rural Ontario: the relentless and arbitrary building of wind turbines. When the Green Energy Act removed local authority from the planning and approval process for wind turbines, it unleashed a firestorm of discontent across the province. The government has refused to acknowledge that tangible health risks exist for both humans and animals, despite growing evidence to the contrary. However, when the citizens of Liberal-held seats in Scarborough voiced concern about the proposed wind turbines for the Lake Ontario shore, the government heard them and virtually killed the proposal.

However, the concerns of citizens in rural Ontario, such as those in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, obviously don't count with this government. Many constituents from my riding made the trip to



Queen's Park today to again voice their opposition to these proposals.

This government has been caught up in its own ideological rhetoric: If it's green, it's good, and they know more than the rest of us. That might be an effective approach at a Liberal Party policy conference, but it doesn't work with the residents of this province.

Since the introduction of the Green Energy Act, the McGuinty government has denied municipalities the right to reflect the concerns and needs of their communities. It's time for this government to renew its arbitrary policy on the proliferation of wind turbines and start listening to the very people that must live with the aftermath. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

BRUCE CROZIER

PAT HAYES

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I rise today to pay tribute to two former members of this House that we sadly lost this year.

The honourable Bruce Crozier represented the riding of Essex for nearly 18 years. Bruce was first elected in 1993 and served as Deputy Speaker and Chair of the committee of whole, as well as serving as a member of the Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction. He was also widely known in this House by his trademark bow ties. More so, he was known for his class and being a consummate gentleman.

We also suffered another tremendous loss with the passing of my good friend and political mentor Pat Hayes. Pat was first elected in 1985 and again in 1990. Pat taught me much about what I know of politics today. He taught me to never drive a car as a candidate during an election campaign, because you are distracted and you will hit somebody. He taught me that people might not always agree with what you say, but they will respect the fact that you have the guts to say it.

Both these men served my community in this House with dignity and diligence. When Pat was ill this past December, Bruce stopped in to visit him and to wish him well. That visit meant a lot to Pat and to his family. It shows the character of the people that the riding of Essex sends here as their representatives. Above all else, humanity and decency should reign in all of our actions as members of this assembly. Pat and Bruce epitomized those qualities, and it is an honour to have known both of them. Thank you.

BAXTER CORP.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of Baxter Canada's new headquarters in my riding of Mississauga-Brampton South. Baxter has been one of the leaders in providing sustainable health care solutions. Baxter's new state-of-the-art headquarters is designed and built to LEED specifications, with efficient water and energy conservation

systems. Baxter is at the cutting edge of ensuring clean and green solutions to their energy needs.

1310

Baxter's focus on environmental sustainability and paving a path for the future echoes our government's own commitment to providing a sustainable path to the future through the Green Energy Act.

I would like to thank Baxter for their focus on a sustainable environment. I would also like to express my gratitude to them for choosing my great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South for their new corporate headquarters and for bringing jobs to my community.

## DURHAM REGION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very thankful for the applause. I want to remind the House of our vision for Durham, to lead to its success.

Mr. Speaker, we need to move ahead on completing the many promises made by Premier McGuinty over the last eight years—for instance, Highway 407 east to Highway 35/115. Building half a highway just isn't good enough for the local municipalities, the businesses, tourism, commuters and Ontarians who counted on Premier McGuinty's promise being delivered.

We need the promised refurbishment and the new build at the Darlington nuclear station, not just for Durham but for all of Ontario.

We need the long-promised GO rail extension, to strengthen the transit connections developed by the region of Durham—promised by Premier McGuinty.

We need co-operation and leadership at all levels of government. Tim Hudak encourages us to work co-operatively with our mayors; it appears that Premier McGuinty does not. We need co-operation, not opposition, to encourage agriculture, home entrepreneurs, business, small business, investment opportunities and jobs. When it comes to jobs, a strong economy, respect for taxpayers and accountability in government, it's Durham's priority and it should be Ontario's priority.

In this House, recognize the vision for Durham; work with us. I urge the House to allow Durham region to reach its full potential. It is now Durham's time.

## CHURCHILL TROJANS

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I rise today to congratulate my old high school football team, the Sir Winston Churchill Trojans, the Thunder Bay senior champions, who were in Toronto on November 29 to compete in the Northern Bowl.

I was able to attend the first half at the Rogers Centre Tuesday morning to watch and cheer our team. After a difficult first half, Churchill mounted a furious comeback

in typical Trojan fashion, only to come up just short, 34-28.

I want to offer my congratulations to Eh Gae Moo, Justin Fui, Jarred White, Jesse Inman, Stephen Manduca, David Tamarzov, Adam Vance, Kwe Lay Lo, Robbie Nistico, Dan Wirta, Matthew Steele, Taylor Auger, Alex Abbey, Devyn Chenier, Robby Posthumus, Cam Claridge, Jason Blekkenhorst, Mitchell McCall, Isaac Veurink, Brenden Condie, Remmington Steadwell, James Perry, Alex Armstrong, Kurtis Toivanen, Landon Gagnon, Mitchell Zemenick, Mitchell Halow, Josh Hurdon, Devon Ward, Brendan Doyle, Chris Cooke, Hunter Janssens, Julian Schultz, Rory McConnell and Chris Dunbar.

Also, Speaker, I congratulate coaches Doromko, Crocker, Stevenson, Poole, Jespersion, Gamble and Gamble, as well as team managers Emily Quarles, Julie Becotte and Vanessa Makinga.

The players, coaching staff and parents who travelled to Toronto did a great job of representing their high school community and the city of Thunder Bay. I thank them very much. They made us all very proud.

#### ABILITY ONLINE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to rise today to pay tribute to Ability Online. As you may know, this Saturday, December 3, is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This lends itself as a fitting time to highlight the fantastic work Ability Online has been doing for 20 years now; to congratulate them on their successes and the differences that they make in people's lives every day; and of course, to wish them a happy anniversary.

Ability Online is a free Internet community where young people with disabilities and long-term illnesses are able to access 24/7 friendship, support, information-sharing and skill development opportunities in a monitored and family-friendly environment. Regardless of the nature of the issue, Ability Online has members of all ages and abilities waiting to answer questions and provide support.

Of particular interest to the members of the Legislature this week is bullying support through Ability Online. Bully-bouncers are waiting online 24/7 to help anyone who needs help dealing with on- or off-line bullying.

I commend the work that Ability Online has been doing for the past 20 years and wish them continued success in the future.

#### PETITIONS

##### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Energy Farming Ontario Inc., Settlers Landing Wind Park LP and/or Snowy Ridge Wind Park LP are proposing to construct 10 wind turbines within the city of Kawartha Lakes in order to produce up to 20 megawatts of power (the proposed wind parks); and

"Whereas the proposed wind parks will adversely affect wildlife populations, wildlife migration patterns, human health and the natural environment; and

"Whereas the proposed wind parks are to be located, in whole or in part, on the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the location of the proposed wind parks is not in keeping with the Ontario government's vision for the Oak Ridges moraine, which is the protection of the 'ecological ... features and functions that support the health and well-being of the region's residents and ecosystems';

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent regulations based on science and local planning."

This is signed by hundreds of people within the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, and I'm going to hand it over to page Lila.

#### MUNICIPAL PLANNING

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Lombardy, specifically on Bay Road, for providing me with this petition. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas municipalities have always had control over planning matters in their communities; and

"Whereas community consultation and engagement is essential for successful green energy projects; and

"Whereas local residents should be actively involved in all discussions about green energy projects in their community;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government return planning power for renewable energy projects to municipalities and local residents by passing Bill 10, the Local Municipality Democracy Act, 2011, as introduced by Todd Smith, MPP for Prince Edward-Hastings."

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Danica.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to present this petition. It's from the people of Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario government" is making PET scanning "a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and



"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are available and performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

It is my pleasure to affix my signature to it and ask page Theodore to bring it to the Clerk.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm presenting petitions here on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, as well as the constituents of the riding of Huron-Bruce and Lisa Thompson. Her petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the 200-foot-high CAW industrial wind turbine being built in the middle of Port Elgin residences and cottages does not comply with the provincial law requiring 550-metre setbacks (to preserve people's health and safety); and

"Whereas it was rejected by the democratically elected municipality" and council "and local residents, who were not adequately informed about the project;

"We, the undersigned, petition" Premier McGuinty and "the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately halt construction of the turbine and require it to be moved to" an appropriate "site that does not violate provincial legislation as passed under the Green Energy Act in 2009. We also petition that area residents be adequately informed" by law "about the siting and not surprised by sudden construction of" wind turbines illegally.

1320

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of the constituents in the province of Ontario and present it to page Bernadette.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm pleased to table this petition on behalf of my constituents of Kitchener-Conestoga.

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in

place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I am pleased to sign and support this petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Kitchener-Conestoga.

### CREMATORIA

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I have a petition here from constituents from my riding. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas strict regulations on emissions of crematoria exist in Europe, and health experts have stated that crematoria should not be located in residential areas due to concerns about emissions of mercury, dioxins and other particulate matter;

"Whereas regulations under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002, are silent on restrictions and leave municipalities without assistance in determining the health impacts of crematoriums in residential communities;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health should immediately conduct a review of crematoriums, studying the health impacts, and make recommendations on minimum setbacks to ensure there are no health risks for neighbouring residential properties. Appropriate guidelines following this review should be included in the regulations coming into effect July 2012. A hold should be placed on the siting of new crematoriums in Ontario in order to protect residents from toxic exposure until the review is conducted and appropriate guidelines are set."

I fully agree with this petition and will affix my signature.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of concerned residents of Ontario. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to deliver this, through page Theodore, to the table.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I affix my signature, as I am in agreement, and give it to page Theodore.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I am pleased to table this petition on behalf of my colleague Todd Smith, MPP for Prince Edward-Hastings, and his constituents.

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I am pleased to sign and support this petition on behalf of the constituents of Prince Edward-Hastings, and I am going to give it to page Michela to table.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You almost need a separate petition just on the word "epidemiological" in this place some days.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

1330

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

Speaker, I support this petition and affix my name to it.



## WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition as well to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put" in place "a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I support this petition at well, Mr. Speaker, and have affixed my signature to it.

PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS

## ONTARIO ONE CALL ACT, 2011

## LOI DE 2011 SUR ONTARIO ONE CALL

Mr. Bailey moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd. /  
Projet de loi 8, Loi sur Ontario One Call Ltd.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I want to announce at the start that I will be sharing my time today with the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin I would like to draw your attention to the west visitor and members' gallery. Seated there you will find supporters of Bill 8, the Ontario One Call Act, 2011, representing industry, safety organizations and municipalities. I would like to pay special attention, special recognition to Jim Douglas, president of the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance, who is sitting in the west members' gallery with the other board members, of the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance. They're here today representing, and not ex-

clusive, Toronto Hydro, Avertex Utility, Vivax Inc., Landscape Ontario, the city of Toronto, Aecon Utilities, the WSIB, TransCanada, AECOM, Hydro One Networks, Enbridge Gas Distribution, Union Gas, Bell, ACI Survey Consultants, G-Tel Engineering and the Ontario Home Builders' Association. I would also like to welcome Kevin Easey, past president of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association, who flew in from Ottawa especially today for my bill. They have shown tremendous leadership by championing the issue of safety for Ontario residents. Thank you to everyone for your support.

Mr. Speaker, my riding of Sarnia–Lambton is home to Ontario's oil, gas and chemical industry, an industry that I devoted over 30 years of my life to. In fact, just prior to my election to this House, I worked at the Nova Chemicals' St. Clair River works facility, where I was the contractor coordinator, and I was in charge of issuing excavation permits as well as safety permits. When working in Sarnia's chemical valley, the first lesson that I learned and that any new employee learns there today is that safety is always priority job one.

I'm proud to say Sarnia–Lambton is 25 times safer for an employee in the construction industry or any other industry; it's 25 times safer working in Sarnia–Lambton because of the work between the unions and the management and the local community. If you talk to any of the hard-working employees involved in Sarnia's petrochemical industry, they'll tell you that knowing what dangers you face on a job site is the only way to know what sort of precautions you need to take. This is even more important when your job site is made up of a vast underground network of pipes that connect all of our plants, factories, businesses, and even our homes.

Today, homeowners and excavators alike must rely on a patchwork system that is outdated, complicated and cumbersome to locate underground infrastructure. To be frank, Ontarians are left with a system that is compromising the safety of homeowners and excavators alike.

For example, before you landscape or fence your lot, excavate a patio or pool area, upgrade your driveway, repair your home's foundation or add a porch or another room to your house, you as a homeowner, or an excavator, are expected to call for the locates of underground infrastructure on your property before you dig. In other words, you the homeowner, or the excavator, are expected to call for the locations of the wires, pipelines, water mains and anything else that might be under the ground where you are about to dig. Then your utilities, hopefully, will arrive to mark the ground above where this infrastructure exists.

The problem in many communities across Ontario is that you may have to call up to—count these—13, that's right, different phone numbers to ensure that you have covered everything that may be under the ground in your particular location. So before you start your project, you need to account for electrical power lines, cables, street lights, traffic signals, gas and oil pipelines, sewers, tele-

communications lines etc. Industry experts estimate that there is over \$100 billion worth of buried infrastructure in our province, and yet there is no one source of complete or detailed information about the location of all these critical assets.

This is what I mean, Mr. Speaker, when I say that Ontario has an outdated, complicated and cumbersome system in place. So I don't think it will be much of a surprise to you when I say that some homeowners and excavators, I'm sad to say, simply aren't bothering to call for locates before they dig. Thirteen phone calls is simply 12 too many.

Without easy access to complete and proper information about underground infrastructure, damage regularly occurs to natural gas lines, electrical wiring and water mains. At the very least, this means increased costs to homeowners, excavators, municipalities, taxpayers and the province. In fact, in Ontario last year there were 3,200 natural gas pipeline strikes alone.

Accidental damage to underground infrastructure is not only expensive, but it can be deadly. Today, the number of emergency calls that result from damage done to underground infrastructure in Ontario is on the rise, and each and every one of those pipeline strikes has the potential to end in tragedy.

Consider, for example, what happened on April 24, 2003. A construction company working at an Etobicoke strip mall ruptured a gas line, sparking a massive explosion that killed seven people, levelled a two-storey building and destroyed several storefronts and apartments located in that vicinity.

In 2008, a landscaping company accidentally ruptured a propane line on a property in Niagara Falls. The propane leached through the earth into the adjacent basement, causing an accident.

Just this past September, two Ottawa-area residents sustained first- and second-degree burns after rupturing a gas line while drilling postholes in their backyard. Neighbours in the townhouse community were able to escape without injury but have been left to deal with the cost and stress of significant fire and water damage.

In each and every one of these cases, Mr. Speaker, it was discovered that the companies and people at the site did not call to locate any of the underground infrastructure.

Development across the province and in our communities has made the business of excavating very risky. Sitting idly by and doing nothing is no longer an acceptable option. The well-being and livelihood of the residents of Ontario cannot be taken for granted. I, along with MPP Miller and the many stakeholders here today, believe that it's long overdue for our province to have a mandatory one-call system. That is why the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and I have introduced Bill 8, the Ontario One Call Act, 2011.

Bill 8 will create a single call centre for all underground locates for use by homeowners and excavators alike. So instead of having to call up to 13 numbers to receive all your locates, homeowners and excavators

would make one—count it, one—free call. Mr. Speaker, this is a simple solution that cuts red tape. The organization and capacity to implement this system is currently available.

Ontario One Call is already operating as an industry initiative out of a central call centre in Guelph, with 130 members representing 700 infrastructure agencies in Ontario, including over 40 municipalities that represent nearly 60% of Ontario's population. Unfortunately, industry analysts estimate that there are still about 400 organizations with assets in the ground that have not signed up.

For those members wondering if this sort of system can work across a large jurisdiction such as Ontario, the answer is yes. Currently, each and every US state has in place a mandatory one-call system. The federal government of the United States thought it was such a good idea that they mandated a national number: 811. When you dial 811 anywhere in the US, you are automatically connected to your call centre that has access to your area's information. As a result, the 811 system incidence of infrastructure and utility damage has decreased by close to 70% between 2004 and 2008.

**1340**

That's the sort of result that the good people of this province want when the House passes this legislation, if and when it should pass. I hope that all members of this House will recognize the need to implement this simple yet effective one-call solution. In conclusion, I ask that the members of this House please vote in favour of Bill 8 today and help to move our province one step closer to creating a comprehensive one-call system. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I would like to remit the remainder of my time to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I sit here and listen to my colleague MPP Bailey talk about Bill 8, I wonder what has taken us so long to bring a bill like this before this Legislature. It just makes good sense to simplify a system to reduce the possibility of devastation to workers, families and communities. It's our job as elected representatives in this province to put aside partisanship and to focus on the real needs of each of our communities. Bill 8 does that.

In this first instance, it addresses what I see as one of the most significant problems with our current system. We have a variety of timelines and methods, municipality to municipality, which an individual or company must know about before even thinking of making the changes or improvements they envision. It really never crossed my mind that a landscaper would need to be so fully aware of underground infrastructure. We forget how deeply they must sometimes dig to make the change a homeowner wants.

Sadly, there are too many examples of accidentally severed propane and natural gas lines, telephone lines etc. The delayed effect of this severed propane line



leaves one with the mistaken assurance that everyone is fine when nothing happens at the time the line is severed. I also fully support mandatory carbon monoxide detectors in every dwelling and workplace; these detectors should not replace the requirement that all underground infrastructure must be easily identified before any work is done.

I worked for 32 years at the Stelco-US Steel mill as an industrial mechanic/welder/fitter, so I'm quite aware of the absolute need for tradespeople to know where and what every line and pipe in the entire facility is, how it is used, who to call and how to fix the problem. But even with that intimate knowledge, I would not assume to know what and where every utility that services my home is, and how long to dig or work around them.

It is clear, when one considers the various organizations that support Bill 8, that it's long, long overdue. It is already partly in place with the voluntary Ontario One Call organization, so expanding this to a not-for-profit mandatory system will not be the onerous task that starting from scratch could be.

The business leaders, who know this industry better than any of us, are fully in support of Bill 8. Even the few concerns or hesitations that have been raised can be addressed during the committee process so that we can have the best system possible with the least negative impacts. We will need to address the financial impacts on all parties, including municipalities, and be sure that the insurance companies are fully aware and onside.

But we can do this. We can work together to get this good piece of legislation referred to committee for public hearings in the intersession so that we bring Bill 8 back to the Legislature for third reading and royal assent as soon as possible in the spring session. I encourage our Liberal colleagues to stand with us and put your full support behind Bill 8. Let's make this happen. Let's work together for all Ontarians. This is a new era in this Legislature, and we're going to do things for the people of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Etobicoke—Centre.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations.

I stand today in support of this bill. April 23 was a spring day in Etobicoke. Many of us were thinking about an election. I had a friend who had just gone to a hair salon, popped in and picked up some cleaning; they made it as far as the set of lights just down the street when an extraordinary explosion occurred. Seven people lost their lives. The greatest number of lives lost in a pipeline explosion in Canada was in Etobicoke Centre. Seven people, seven families—from some digging that was happening down the street. Those people are still impacted, because today, we're still before the courts.

So when you think about the opportunity that is presented here enabling us to make a difference in the lives so this doesn't happen to others, it really behooves us to actually work together to find what I have always called the art of the possible.

Sure, there are some technical difficulties—no question—and there are some other people to bring to the table. But I believe people of goodwill want to do this. I believe, and I've heard from each of the associations, that they want to do it.

You can make the economic business case of \$39 million that has been lost by one industry or another—1,100 digs from one; 3,200 from another, where there's been damage. For me, it was seven people in my community who lost their lives over somebody digging and hitting a gas pipeline.

Fortunately, one of the things that did come out of this from the engineer, Peter Roy, whose mom was lost in this, was a backup valve that now one of the gas pipelines actually uses, that would help prevent this as well. So there were some lessons to be learned.

I really think that what we need to be able to do is say to ourselves: How do we prevent this in the future? How do we work with people in an old infrastructure system?

I've been involved in infrastructure through three ministries, where you know that there are three different sets for your Bell, your gas pipeline, your cable, whatever is beneath the surfaces, much less your sewer infrastructure. It's time to be able to say to someone who is going to do that intensification in that building, "We can help you before you hit that impediment. Simply call one number instead of 13," because you and I both know people will not call 13 numbers, but they will call one.

So, yes, there's education that needs to be done. There is work that we can do by working together. Going to committee makes some sense. Listening to the industry that says, in fact, this is free and they'll absorb the costs—these are the things that make a difference.

Today I'm asking you to consider this in memory of Dora Carambelas, Tina Kirkimtzis, Robert Fairley, Irene Miyama, Adele Brown, Elizabeth Roy and Lillian Guglietti, all of whom lost their lives in a gas explosion that I believe was totally, completely and utterly preventable.

I'd like to share my time with my colleagues from Niagara and Willowdale. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I want to commend the member for Sarnia—Lambton for bringing this matter before the House. Really, what it does is it's going to codify, if you will, the voluntary practices that are already out there, and by the act of codifying the voluntary practices that are out there in most jurisdictions, it's going to make it clearer for everybody to understand both their obligations and what they can expect by way of information when they're beginning a dig.

Simply put, this is what the act requires, if it's passed. The act is going to require every municipality in Ontario, Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation, every gas distributor, every gas transmitter, every operator of an electrical distribution system, every person or entity regulated under the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, every person that owns or operates a pipeline and every



person that owns or operates an underground infrastructure that crosses a public right of way—those persons are going to have to be members of the corporation.

Then, once they're a member of the corporation, this is what they have to do, and it's very, very simple. When a member of the corporation receives information from any of those persons that I've just referred to about a proposed excavation or dig, the member is required to mark the location of its underground infrastructure that is in the vicinity of the excavation or dig site, or indicate that its infrastructure will not be affected by the excavation or dig.

It's very simple. Essentially, it says everybody that's making a dig that could create some harm or danger, if a line is ruptured or cut or something like that—if you're in that category, you join the corporation. When you join the corporation, your obligation is to provide information about what's underground there and what a digger should watch out for.

I can't think of something simpler than that, that would provide great protections, both for the people around the excavation, the people who may be exposed to the harm if there's a rupture or a gas line is cut or an electrical line is cut.

The beauty of codifying this legislation, as the member for Sarnia-Lambton's bill does, is in its simplicity. When you balance its simplicity against the great protections that it provides, I can't think of a reason why anyone, or any thoughtful person, would reasonably want to oppose this safety initiative. As the speaker before me made reference to the tragic circumstances out her way, I think of what might have been the situation had a piece of legislation like this been in effect at the time.

1350

So I'm very happy to lend my support to this bill and I commend the member for Sarnia-Lambton for bringing this forward. I'm very, very impressed with its simplicity and the effect, the payoff, that that simplicity is going to have. In my view it's a model piece of legislation.

I might add another thought. The last little while, we've heard a lot about members of this Legislature, in a minority government situation, reaching out and finding ways to co-operate. We've heard from the member from Sarnia-Lambton, we've heard from the previous speaker from Etobicoke Centre, and I expect that we're going to hear from the member from Niagara Falls. I expect we're going to hear from—we've heard from the member for Hamilton Mountain—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. Did I do something to you?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. I have trouble. That was your predecessor. But it's an example of this Legislature, in a minority situation, working together. I am pleased to support the legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations—first time I've had you sitting in the chair for me.

I stand here today to support my Sarnia-Lambton colleague on his bill because the people in my riding sent me here to make Ontario better and safer. With this proposed bill we have something that homeowners, builders, landscapers and utility companies all support and something that has proven widely effective for our neighbours to the south. In short, what the member from Sarnia-Lambton is proposing is simply good public policy.

I'm also proud to be working with my NDP colleague from the riding of Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. It is wonderful to be able to work together across political stripes to put forth a piece of legislation that is good for Ontario. This is what the citizens of Ontario expect: for us to work together to implement policy that's good for our province.

There are two reasons why this bill is good for Ontario. The first is purely from the dollars-and-cents perspective. We know that property damage resulting from line strikes totals almost \$39 million a year. This is an easy to measure, unambiguous cost of line strikes. But you must also consider the following: When a gas or electrical line is struck during a construction or landscaping job, work has to stop. The construction crew is sidelined until the problem is fixed and they can safely return to work. Further, let's say a phone line is clipped and shuts down service to a business. Suddenly the people cannot use their phones, their Internet or fax machines. So line breaks not only cost millions of dollars in property damage, but they're also responsible for reductions in productivity and efficiency for utility companies, contractors, landscapers and the other businesses that are unfortunate enough to be affected by the inadvertent line strikes.

The second reason is more important, and that's for safety. We all know the dangers of mistakenly striking a gas or power line. Serious injury and, unfortunately, death can occur from these strikes, but it's simply avoided by locating the proper utilities. In fact, about 40% of utility line damages is due to digging without locates. It raises the question: Why does underground infrastructure go unlocated despite the potential dangers? The unfortunate answer is that locating all underground infrastructure can be long and burdensome. The result is that contractors and landscapers can cut corners, and this ultimately leads to line breaks that can potentially put people's lives in jeopardy.

Doug Tarry, president of the Ontario Home Builders' Association and member of my riding, fully supports this bill. He's an award-winning home builder. He knows that safety is job one and realizes the job is demanding enough. Given that locates are avoided due to the cumbersome process of identifying all the underground infrastructure there might be, the one-call system drastically streamlines the process to encourage locates to be performed. One call gives a single point of contact for anyone to call to locate underground infrastructure.

Now, the one-call system already exists as a voluntary body, and 60% of Ontario residents live in an area served. Many of you may think this is adequate or



sufficient; sadly, it's not the case. South of the border, in New York state, which has a mandatory one-call system, there are roughly 2.33 utility strikes per 1,000 locates. In Ontario, with a voluntary system, our number of utility strikes per 1,000 locates is double this figure. It's unacceptable, and we should strive to do better.

In all, it is not enough to have a voluntary system that only covers part of Ontario. We need a legislated mandatory one-call system which has already proven itself south of the border. This policy saves money, reduces service stoppages due to line damage and, most importantly, enhances the safety of all Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm extremely proud to have an opportunity to speak on Bill 8. I want to congratulate the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and, of course, the member from Sarnia–Lambton. You notice I put the member from Stoney Creek first because he was a little upset that he wasn't mentioned a few times.

I wanted to say a couple of things. My first experience—and it just kind of hit me when I was sitting listening to my colleagues speaking. One time I was chair of parking and traffic for the city of Niagara Falls, as a councillor, and one of the things that we looked after was the determination of putting in stop signs.

I remember early in my career, we passed a couple of locations for putting up stop signs, but they didn't seem to go up as quickly as I expected. When I was talking with the director of parking and traffic, he explained to me that there were a number of calls that he had to make before he could put up a stop sign, to make sure that underground there wasn't anything that would be affected. I remember I said to Karl, "Well that's kind of odd." He said, "Kim, you have to understand there are"—I think he said 12 or 13—"phone calls we have to make, so it takes time."

I really didn't click into it at the time, until this bill came forward. As well, a number of the agencies, like Enbridge, had come to speak to me about this. That's when I realized how complex it was for something so simple as having just one location; you make the one call.

In my riding, and it was mentioned by the member from Sarnia–Lambton, we too had a very unfortunate incident where an individual, because of some excavation that had been done—it didn't cause the sad results until the homeowner came home and was in their home that evening. Something sad happened in the home—the homeowner was killed—a very sad situation, but it was exactly what's been talked about.

So this isn't just about property, this is about lives. You've already heard that mentioned, and some very sad names were mentioned, about what happened to them.

The passage of the Ontario One Call Act would significantly reduce the risk of damages to the underground infrastructure in the province due to digging without proper locations. Can you imagine that you just make one call? It seems so simple.

It seems really odd to me, sitting here as a member of the Legislature, that we have to go through a bill and a procedure and we have to have all of this debate. It seems to me that we would just say, "Yes, let's do it." I'm certainly in support of it. Can we just move the bill along quickly?

I have not had a negative phone call from anyone saying this is something we shouldn't do. I just haven't had that kind of phone call. Even some of the homeowners who I've circulated the bill through to say, "What do you think?" even in my office—some of them said, "I didn't know you were supposed to call anybody, Kim." Somebody even said that to me.

So I'm really pleased to stand up and say to my two colleagues: Congratulations.

I want to make one last comment, because we hear this working together as if it never happened before. So I want to mention, because this is a great opportunity to mention to my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton, where the two of us were able to work together to help a very important industry, and that's the duty-free industry. We were able to make some changes in that industry. We both have heard the positive results: jobs were saved; money that was leaving our province and being spent over in the United States is spent here by Canadians who went through the duty-free shops.

I think for the public watching that it's not the first time and it will not be the last time that the three parties work together. It's not new. It's refreshing to hear it mentioned more often; that's really exciting to hear. It's been a great week to kick off a minority government, and I'm really excited about us working together.

I'm pleased to support the bill. Thank you very much.

1400

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** 'Tis I. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 8.

I want to congratulate my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton and also my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for bringing this bill to the Legislature for the second time. The first time, my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton brought it on his own. I applauded him at that time, and I applaud him again. I certainly thank him for his tenacity and his stick-to-it-iveness in ensuring that this got returned to this Legislature at the earliest possible time under his schedule and the rules of engagement that exist here with respect to private members' business.

I've heard, on the other side, the member for Niagara Falls and also the members for Etobicoke Centre and Willowdale coming at it from different angles. But particularly, the member from Niagara Falls talked about, "What's taken so long? This seems like such an automatic. Why are we debating this? Why are we not acting upon it? Why does this not exist already?"

If you listen to some of the statistics from my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton, Mr. Bailey, all 50 states have this implemented. In Canada, we like to think we're



sometimes maybe a little more advanced when it comes to safety issues and things like that, a little more progressive than the Americans. Well, here they are: All 50 states—not 40, not 46—all 50 states have implemented this. So what's the problem here in Ontario? We need to get on with it. Thirty-two hundred natural gas breaks last year.

My heart goes out to the families of those people in Etobicoke Centre, and I thank the member for refreshing our memory. We live in such a helter-skelter, crazy, wild world that we tend to forget about yesterday's disaster as soon as we hear about today's. But it goes without saying that we need to remember those families and the loss of life in that gas explosion. And as she said, that was something that was eminently preventable.

So what can we do here today? Well, number one, we can begin by passing this bill. It's clearly been shown in other jurisdictions that it works. What was the statistic I heard my colleague say? A 70% reduction in infrastructure damages when a similar regulation was implemented in other jurisdictions. So from a cost point of view, it's a no-brainer.

The loss of life is obviously the starkest example you can have of the need for changes and improvements in regulation. One life lost—a preventable life lost—is one too many. But not only that: There wasn't loss of life in all 3,200 gas breaks, and thank God for that. But I guarantee you one thing: There was inconvenience suffered by our citizens.

Every time there's a utility break, for whatever reason—and obviously we must have 13 of them, when you have 13 calls that you've got to make, which could be replaced by one call—we inconvenience our citizens. And there is no reason whatsoever to do that when we have within our grasp a piece of legislation that would allow—I'm not saying there would never be a mistake made; good Lord, we don't live in a perfect world. But we know one thing: Statistics say that it would lead to a 70% reduction in infrastructure damages, so we have to believe that the improvements would be immeasurable, and the removal of that inconvenience for our citizens in this helter-skelter, crazy world we all live in.

You know what? Just yesterday—I live up in Barry's Bay, and of course we had freezing rain up there. I'm here in Toronto where the power never went out, but my wife was without power for about 12 hours. She and the cat were getting cold. That's an inconvenience. Whenever you lose one of your services, that's an inconvenience. Now, that power outage couldn't have been prevented by this one call, because of those acts of God, acts of nature, when you have storms of that kind and your power is out in rural areas. We accept that and we understand that. But when there are things we can do to prevent that, we should be doing them.

So this is a bill—and based on what I've heard on the other side of the House, it looks like we've got support there. But I need to remind them, too—there is all of this talk about co-operation; there is all of this talk about working together, like we've formed some new part-

nership—I haven't seen a whole lot of evidence of that in the agenda of the government to this point.

But I would ask those members, not only those who have spoken, but the silent majority over there who have not spoken but definitely agree with my colleagues, that the point must be made not to John Yakabuski and not to our good friends—and I thank all of them for joining us today, to bring that support and graphically show how this is needed—but to the man in the corner office. No, I don't mean Pat Dillon today—I know he's running the show—but I do mean the Premier. The point must be made to the Premier, that this is so good—in fact, why is Bob Bailey bringing this forward along with Paul Miller? Why are they bringing it forward? Because the government didn't see fit to bring it forward. This should have been a piece of government legislation; it shouldn't have been a private members' bill. But they're more concerned with divisive policies like this healthy home tax credit that's going to benefit just a small smidgeon of the population and not supporting, for example, an HST cut on people's home heating. We didn't get credit on the HST yesterday on our home heating; we didn't have the home heating because the power was out.

That's where we need to be taking this Legislature, so that the government should be leading the way on good pieces of law and legislation like this one from my colleagues sitting beside me here today. So I would ask that not only do we support this bill today—and I hope we have this co-operation in the House when my friend Todd Smith from Prince Edward-Hastings brings his bill that represents people in this province, again, against the scourge of government just running roughshod over municipalities. I hope we have that same support today.

I'm running out of time, so I'm asking you, please, please, when we leave here today, take a visit to the corner office on floor 2 and say, "Premier"—

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Tim Hudak's office?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It will be Tim's eventually, Kim, I assure you of that.

But, "Premier, don't let this languish. Let's get on with the job. This is good legislation; let's do it."

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Mr. Bailey, you might want to talk to that guy later.

It's my pleasure to co-sponsor Bill 8, the Ontario One Call Act, with the member from Sarnia-Lambton.

The fact that this bill establishes a non-profit organization that will provide a single point of contact for contractors and for individuals to locate underground oil and gas pipelines, telecommunication cables, electrical and transit signal wires, and sewer and water pipelines on a property makes it extremely appealing.

The organization, as it exists today, has 130 volunteer members, representing 700 infrastructure agencies, including major utilities. A mandatory system would also capture federally governed systems, such as the Trans-Canada pipeline, which must participate if the system is mandatory. Although 60% of Ontario's population is



covered by these members, we need to ensure that 100% of Ontario's population has this same coverage, safety and security, Mr. Speaker.

As energy costs go higher and more municipalities are included in the natural gas system, we need to ensure that greater protection is afforded to all Ontarians. Not only do we have increasing natural gas lines, but we have an increasingly complex underground infrastructure from many utilities. US states already enjoy the benefits of a mandatory one-call system, which has proven in itself a real life and accident saver, as well as of significant monetary benefit to their communities.

Even to get the most basic information about underground utilities can take as many as 10 or more telephone calls, which for the average homeowner is far too complex and onerous. It is easier to simply go ahead and dig. The one-call system would make it so simple: Just call a short number like 811, and get all the information you need to get started on your garden or home renovation project.

1410

An added feature of the one-call system is that it operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week: a service that allows homeowners to deal with these issues when they get home from work and not have to take their lunch hour for days on end just to get through the myriad of organizations currently required

One of the concerns I do have about the system is that we bring all insurance companies on board with no excuses from them. We want to know that they fully support the system and will consider one phone call to Ontario One Call as complete due diligence in the case of a claim. But that's a detail that could be ironed out during public hearings and contact with insurance companies.

Ontario One Call is an industry-led initiative that makes the business of digging in Ontario easier for homeowners and contractors alike, but it's an initiative that should have 100% provincial government support. It's a bill that should pass second reading, be sent to committee for public hearings and be sent directly to third reading and royal assent. This is no-brainer, Mr. Speaker.

I was surprised to learn that a full 40% of all damage to underground infrastructure is the result of digging without knowing exactly where the underground infrastructure is located. The cost to your construction or home renovation project from these accidents is a stunning \$39 million a year, some of which is passed on to each of us through our property taxes and utility bills. When one adds the cost to businesses, it is easy to see where the costs of construction are so high and often why projects run over the estimated completion time.

It is compelling to know that the States' damage caused by digging without knowledge of underground infrastructure was reduced by 70% when the one-call system became mandatory. That is absolutely huge, Speaker—70% in America.

One of the most visible underground infrastructure projects is the TransCanada pipeline, but we often don't

think of its impact through the province. Some of the most expensive cottage properties in Muskoka have the TransCanada pipeline as their neighbour. Consider the damage that could be done and the delayed emergency response times in these less-serviced areas. Then consider the route this pipeline has travelled just to get to Muskoka and how well- or not well-serviced those northern communities are by comparison. It just makes sense to get the Ontario One Call system implemented as soon as possible.

I am pleased to see the organizations that have come on board to support this bill. The Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance, a not-for-profit 400-member-driven organization dedicated to ensuring public safety, environmental protection and the integrity of underground infrastructure by promoting damage prevention practices, stated in its press release supporting Bill 8: "Public and worker safety are at serious risk when utility lines such as buried pipelines or hydro lines are struck or damaged because homeowners, building contractors and other excavators do not obtain the precise location of these lines before they dig." I agree wholeheartedly with the alliance's statement, "Safety cannot be a voluntary exercise."

Another organization lending its enthusiastic support to Bill 8 is the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association. Their president said, "There is an urgent need for a mandatory one-call system that extends across the province to ensure the safety of our workers and the safety of our general public."

And one of Canada's largest natural gas utilities and a long-time advocate of this kind of mandatory legislation, Union Gas, stated in its press release, "Ontario should move to pass the Ontario One Call Act—a bill that would improve safety, save money and increase productivity."

Union Gas also stated that, "In addition to the risk of a public emergency and the inconvenience of utility outages, economic analysts conservatively estimate that damages caused by excavators who don't call before they dig cost utility customers, municipalities and taxpayers about \$39 million a year." We could do a lot with that \$39 million, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of other projects in this province that could use that kind of money. "There are significant additional costs related to dispatching emergency services"—which we forgot about—"to incidents, liability related to injury and/or fatalities and interruptions to businesses."

Just to be sure that the full impact of this bill is understood, let me tell you about just one incident where One Call could have saved a life. In the fall of 2008, Speaker, natural gas service began in Owen Sound. A subcontractor for the gas company was to install the lines at a home which had been serviced by propane and had propane lines and buried storage tanks on the property. The natural gas line was installed using an underground plow, which inadvertently severed a propane line without any immediate reaction. The propane leaked into the ground and through the foundation of the house, and the next day, when the homeowner lit a candle in the



basement, the accumulated propane ignited, causing an explosion and fire. The homeowner was blown out of the house and suffered third-degree burns, leading to death. The subcontractor was fined this past March after pleading guilty to failing to ensure that the homeowner had marked the propane lines and tank prior to the subcontractor excavating.

This bill has many strengths, but to be fair, some concerns have been raised, and to address these, full consultation is needed to ensure that it doesn't have unintended negative effects. We can deal with that in committee.

We need to fully understand the impacts on our municipalities. Municipalities need to be assured that the creation of a province-wide system outside of the municipal purview will not compromise the safety and role of municipal permit providers. They also want to ensure that this extra requirement does not add to the administrative burden of already-stretched municipalities. For example, would there be financial implications for the municipalities?

There is also uncertainty about what will happen to the employees who staff current municipal-level one-call services. Will there be job losses?

Finally, some municipalities will still need to be reassured that making the one-call system mandatory is necessary.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but I'm going to leave some time for one of the other members, the member from Essex. But I must tell you that this is long overdue, Mr. Speaker. I am so pleased that our two parties have worked together, and I'm sure that the government will join in to make this a reality, because we certainly don't want any more fatalities because of these types of situations in our province. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really honoured to lend my support as a colleague of my counterpart from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, and I commend his partnership with the member from Sarnia-Lambton.

Through the lens as the critic for infrastructure and labour and also as a former construction worker—a young construction worker on heavy construction sites in and around the Windsor-Essex area—I can tell you that you're no more vulnerable on a construction site than when you're just about to dig and you're around that machine. So you're always questioning your safety. You're questioning the parameter. You're questioning if the appropriate services have been located and if the job was done right.

I'm pleased, again, to lend my support to this initiative. It makes sense; I think we're finding that out through consensus, through all parties. I'll remind everyone that this is the first time that we have agreed, throughout this Legislature, in all senses. It really is refreshing to hear that, because the bill does make sense. It provides measures of safety and assurance for con-

struction workers and for contractors, mitigates their liability and really streamlines the process. Of course, we've seen facts and figures that indicate that this is the right thing to do, but now it is our opportunity and incumbent upon us to do it as quickly as possible.

So I trust that it will move its way through the process, on to second reading and third reading and eventually become a measure of law as soon as possible, so that young workers like myself can feel safe and comfortable when they're on the job. I look up to the stand and I see a group of young people, young students. Someday, maybe they will be workers in the construction sector, and they'll know that the work that was done in this House today was to ensure that their safety was safeguarded into the future.

I'll mention as well: I commend the group coming together, the association of 100 or more different stakeholders that have decided that this is the right thing to do. Mr. Speaker, shortly after my election in October, I was called by my cousin Lawrence Arcand, who is in the stands today; I'm pleased to see him. It was his first order of business to inform me about the need for this bill, not knowing that it was already in process as well. So, it's refreshing to know that my colleagues were already working on this initiative prior to my joining the Legislature.

Of course, it is a pleasure for me to add my support to this bill today. I think it is high time that we streamline the approach for contractors and make this country safer, in terms of worker safety legislation, as well. This plays a part in that. We know that they come together in a variety of ways—not only in construction, but there are other ways that I'm sure this bill will make sense in other aspects of our labour force as well.

I think it shows that our Legislature can work together, and I'm certainly pleased to add my voice and my support to this today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1420

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Sarnia-Lambton has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by thanking all the members who have participated in the debate today. I appreciate all of your comments and your support, and I'd like to especially mention the members for Etobicoke Centre, Niagara, Willowdale, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, Elgin-Middlesex-London, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and, of course, Essex.

To recap, the Ontario One Call Act, Bill 8, will create a single call centre and database for all underground locates that can be accessed by homeowners and excavators alike. Access to utility locate information in an efficient, timely manner will decrease the unnecessary cost of damage and lost productivity that results from the thousands of inadvertent utility strikes each year.

Mandatory participation by organizations with underground assets will increase the awareness and understanding of the need to properly locate buried infrastructure before a project is undertaken. This awareness



can and will save lives in our province, protecting residents and workers alike.

Ontario One Call is an initiative that was created and brought forth by the utility industry and contractors as a solution to the ever-present problem of injury, infrastructure damage and lost productivity. As a homegrown solution, the Ontario One Call Act, 2011, has the broad support of industry and over 40 municipalities, thanks to a fair, inexpensive approach that ensures participation and service delivery.

It is my hope that this piece of legislation, if passed, will lead to a safer, more productive and prosperous environment.

Again, I would like to thank Jim Douglas and the board of the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance, as well as all the other members, municipalities, excavators and utilities for giving their support to the Ontario One Call Act—I have two pages of names. I would never have gotten them read in.

It is time that all of Ontario's infrastructure agencies and underground asset owners work together to create this smart, comprehensive system for our province.

Safety should not be voluntary; it should be 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I ask the chamber to pass Bill 8, the Ontario One Call Act, and always, always, remember to call before you dig.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you very much. For those in the gallery, we will be taking the vote on this bill at a later time today.

WIRELESS PHONE, SMART PHONE  
AND DATA SERVICE  
TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE  
DES SERVICES DE TÉLÉPHONE MOBILE,  
DE TÉLÉPHONE INTELLIGENT  
ET DE TRANSMISSION DE DONNÉES

Mr. Orazietti moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to provide transparency and protection for consumers of wireless telephone services, smart phone services and data services in Ontario / Projet de loi 5, Loi prévoyant la transparence des services de téléphone mobile, de téléphone intelligent et de transmission de données et la protection des consommateurs de ces services en Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. David Orazietti:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to discuss this issue. As members of the Legislature know, a similar form of this bill, Bill 133, was brought forward in the fall of 2010. It received first reading, and second reading in April 2011, and received all-party support. I want to thank members of the Legislature for that.

We are back at it, because this issue is still not resolved and there is much more we can do to ensure that consumers are protected when it comes to the use of wireless telecommunications in the province of Ontario.

I will be sharing my time with the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, the member from Oakville and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Speaker, I want to try to take folks through the legislation and the implications of passing such a bill. There are about 10 key points that I'd like to raise here. I'll try to do that as concisely as possible. This legislation is needed because this is a pocketbook issue for consumers. Eighty-one percent of households in the province of Ontario subscribe to wireless phones, smart phones and other data devices, and rely on these types of services.

First of all, the bill calls for clearly disclosing all mandatory and optional services that are included in any such agreement. Any specific fee, whether it's an activation fee, additional charge or the so-called government regulatory fee that the companies like to say is an imposition on behalf of the province—all these fees that are part of the contract need to be clearly disclosed for individuals and consumers that are signing such contracts.

Number 2: It's important that we have contracts in plain language, to make them more understandable for consumers. There was a survey done some time ago, talking about the number of consumers who actually understand their contract. It's a relatively low number. It's indicative of the fact that these contracts are written in a very legalistic framework. They're quite lengthy, and they are not written clearly for consumers to understand. This is another item that the bill calls for.

Number 3: One of the key issues around wireless phones and services is the excessive and exorbitant cancellation fees that go along with wireless phones. The fees are substantial; they go on for months of a three-year contract. It seems that, with such a monopoly in this sector, this is the only way you can get a plan.

Right now, most other services that individuals subscribe to would require a cancellation notice of 30 days. That's what this bill would require.

Obviously, we recognize that there are upfront discounts for smart phones and equipment. The company would be able to recoup that. I think everybody recognizes that, after a couple of months of a contract and you're purchasing a smart phone at a cost of \$400 or \$500, you can't simply cancel the contract two months later and walk away with the equipment. Everyone recognizes that. What we're talking about is the month-after-month-after-month-after-month cancellation fee that is foisted upon consumers and is substantially excessive. There's a formula in the bill to reduce that.

Improving transparency with respect to automatic renewal and ensuring that there is the express consent of the consumer before the contract is renewed: Individuals who may be within months of their contract being completed make a minor change to their plan, whether it be adding a conference calling feature or call waiting or



call display, or perhaps they've changed jobs and have a new requirement, and they're now into the contract for another three years, and they were not aware of that. This automatic renewal issue is a significant problem in this sector, and there needs to be more transparency around that.

The notification to consumers around additional charges and exceeding usage limits is also important. The bill would include language around notification on behalf of the providers for usage limits. Whether it be voice limits, data or texting, when you hit 90% of your limit, you're notified. This is going to reduce bill shock, and also it gives consumers the understanding, if they're outside of their particular geographical area—these geographical areas, or your home area code in which you're calling, are often reworked by the companies. Some consumers are aware of it; some consumers aren't. It's important that that is transparent.

Ensuring that consumers are not liable to pay for services while their phone is being repaired: If they've got a problem with their smart phone and they bring it back to their supplier and surrender it to their supplier, who keeps it for three weeks, they can't be billed for the three weeks of service while they don't have the use of the phone. That's an important adaptation. It's being considered as part of legislation similar to this in Manitoba right now—unless, of course, the company were to give you another phone to use, with which you would have access to the service; then they could continue to bill you.

Elimination of the activation and expiry dates on prepaid wireless service cards, much like we've done with gift cards: You pay the company; they've got the money; you should be able to get the service. It shouldn't expire at some point down the road. You shouldn't need to activate it within a certain time period or you lose it.

I've talked to many consumers who said, "I had \$400 on that card, and I missed that payment by an hour and my \$400 is gone." This is a real windfall for the companies. It's unfair to consumers. In this House, we all think it's fair, I think, to eliminate expiry dates on gift cards. This is a similar element in the bill around wireless prepaid cards.

Making costs more transparent—very important: This also helps to reduce bill shock. Advertising is not always perhaps as legitimate and forthright as it could be, when it comes to these providers, around what they are marketing. Phones, \$29.99; get into this plan; voice, data, texting. You get your bill and it's \$150 a month. How did that happen, right? So we're going to require that the providers ensure that the all-in cost is provided up front and is also the most prominent feature of any advertisement. Let's be honest and fair with consumers. Let's ensure that they know exactly what they're getting and what they're paying for. This is another way that we can improve these contracts.

1430

Unlocking the devices: This is an important feature in the bill. Some companies have decided since we introduced the bill last year that, "Okay, we'll unlock it, but

guess what? It's another \$50 surcharge on top of your bill." Look, if you buy your phone outright, and you own it, or you complete your phone contract within the timeframe, once you have purchased those goods and you've got them in good standing, you should be able to take that phone, if you wanted to go to another carrier, and use it. You shouldn't have to worry about whether or not the phone is actually technologically disabled so you can't use it anywhere else. Unlocking would be at no additional charge to the consumer. That would be part of the agreement: Either if you bought the phone outright, or if you finished the contract in good standing, the company would be required to unlock it.

The last point is providing paper billing statements at no extra cost. This is kind of interesting. Quite honestly, there are parts of the province that are more rural, more remote, and don't have access to high-speed Internet and the ability to receive these services. Part of it, you have to wonder, is whether or not the companies actually want you to buy their Internet services to pay for it online as well. The idea of having to pay for your bill to pay your bill seems a bit bizarre, and the consumer should be able to decide how they want their bill, and that would be at no additional charge.

Speaker, we've received some great support from PIAC, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, and Michael Janigan, the executive director. Michael Buonaguro was here today at a media conference earlier. We were talking about the importance of this. Their organization is supporting the changes in this legislation. Mel Fruitman, the vice-president of the Consumers' Association of Canada, supports this legislation. Ken Whitehurst, the executive director of the Consumers Council of Canada, supports this legislation. The Better Business Bureau supports this legislation. Folks, there's ample support for this legislation.

I should tell you that there are a couple of jurisdictions that are moving forward with this. As you know, Quebec is the only province in the country that has provincial legislation reducing cancellation fees, dealing with automatic renewal and making sure that these contracts are written in plain language. That bill passed in July 2010—last year. Manitoba has a bill on track right now that has a number of these provisions included in it. It is on track to pass this spring or summer.

Speaker, it's an \$18-billion industry we're talking about. Contrary to comments made by the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association that this is somehow going to create some government bureaucracy, it is quite clearly not going to do that. In fact, the Wireless Telecommunication Association, which really represents Bell, Rogers and Telus—the big corporations—their complaints have gone up 114% this year alone. So their voluntary code of conduct which they subscribe to, their self-regulating industry that they profess is dealing effectively with consumers, is quite clearly not dealing with consumers.

There is no government regulatory burden attached to this. The reality is that if you don't pay a fee to unlock



your phone, you eliminate the pre-paid wireless card, you reduce the cancellation fees, you make the contracts in plain language—can someone from the Wireless Telecommunication Association tell me how this creates more red tape and a government bureaucracy? Clearly it doesn't. This is smoke and mirrors, and it's fear-mongering around the profit margins, quite frankly, that these large companies have.

There's not the level of competition that we need in this industry. That's why, in a New America Foundation report in 2010 comparing 11 countries, Canada has by far the highest cellphone, wireless phone and smart phone service charges of any of these countries. We need to do something about that, folks. We need to do something about that right now. Consumers are being gouged. It is unfair. We're looking for some levelling of the playing field. These contracts are clearly one-sided.

Perhaps there will be a day when there will be adequate choice in the marketplace, when there will be more market share by different companies. But for the major companies to create other brands and try to create an illusion that there's competition in the marketplace is really misleading and unfair to consumers.

So, Speaker, I'm hoping members of the Legislature will support this legislation. It's good policy and it's good for consumers who are being charged far too excessively for their cellphones and their smart phones in the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your appointment.

I'd like to thank my colleague the member from Sault Ste. Marie for bringing this bill forward. It calls attention to an issue of growing concern across the province. There are thousands of Ontarians who are signing up for wireless phones. There's always some kind of new innovation or smart phone out there. We witnessed a couple of weeks ago, actually, when Ontario residents lined up to get the new iPhone 4S for hours and hours and hours. So I thank the member from the Soo for bringing this issue before the House today.

I speak to this as the PC critic for small business and red tape reduction. I do have a few concerns about this bill, however. To start, I have to admit I find it somewhat hypocritical to have the member for Sault Ste. Marie stand up and propose a bill that changes existing contracts when his party has spent the better part of two weeks in this Legislature telling members of the official opposition that they won't change existing public sector union contracts to implement a mandatory public sector wage freeze. I suppose that only Working Families' allies are subject to having their contracts upheld.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague the member from Sault Ste. Marie has raised many important issues with regard to the reliable delivery of wireless and smart phone services in the province of Ontario. Another concern I have is that, traditionally, telecommunications regulation has been federal jurisdiction in the province of Ontario,

and I have a concern that this bill would increase red tape and regulation in this province and increase the overhead for telecommunications companies in billing and activation that will increase costs for the average consumer.

There are some technical details regarding the activation of prepaid calling cards that will require further study and exploration as we examine the total implications of implementing such policy. They'll also have to look very closely at the advertising provisions to ensure that no one's right to free expression is shortchanged in the name of increased regulation.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the members from York–Simcoe and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Now, with that having been said, I do believe that I'll be able to find some common ground with my colleague the member from Sault Ste. Marie on this issue and on many of the concerns of this bill brings to our stage, and we'll take it to the committee stage.

Back home in Hastings county we've got a saying that "No idea is so dangerous that it can't even be talked about." I believe that my colleague the member from Sault Ste. Marie is a reasonable man who wants to work with the opposition in committee and wants to ensure that we have legislation that succeeds not only in protecting consumer interests, but also in keeping the costs of doing business in the province of Ontario down while we work through this troubled economic time that we're in right now.

I'll be supporting this bill at second reading because I believe in compromise. I believe that the people of Ontario sent a minority government to this Legislature to achieve compromise. While the members on the government benches will demonstrate later this afternoon that they don't believe in compromise and they refuse to work with the opposition, they'll find no such closed-mindedness from me on this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Timmons–James Bay.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. C'est avec plaisir qu'on a finalement l'occasion de parler dans cette Assemblée d'un projet de loi d'un de mes collègues du nord de l'Ontario. Je veux dire félicitations. On a tout fait pour être capable de s'assurer que t'es pas là, mais t'as gagné. Il faut accepter que t'es là.

That's what's so much fun, saying that in French.

1440

Donc, c'est pour dire une couple d'affaires. Premièrement, que nous, les néo-démocrates, on va voter en faveur de ce projet de loi, parce qu'on voit ça comme une opportunité d'être capable de protéger les consommateurs quand ça vient aux abus qui existent quand le monde signe avec les compagnies de communication pour leurs portatifs. Donc, on pense que c'est une bonne idée. Mais c'est rien de vraiment extraordinaire. C'est pas quelque chose comme—j'entends le débat un peu aujourd'hui, puis le monde est en train de dire, "Oh my God, this is this, this is that."



Écoute : on a de la législation qui est un peu la même dans d'autres secteurs de l'économie ontarienne.

Par exemple, ceux qui vendent des autos dans nos municipalités à Sudbury, à Timmins et à Toronto, eux-mêmes sont le sujet d'un projet de loi qui dit qu'il y a des règles pour la manière que tu peux faire des publicités envers ventes en automobiles, parce qu'il y avait toujours la situation où certains mettaient pas tous les frais de transportation, les taxes et autres dans le prix quand ils mettaient ça sur papier, à la radio et à la télévision. Puis les personnes disaient « Ben, je peux acheter ce char-là pour 15 000 pièces, puis 22 000 pièces quelque part d'autre ». Mais la raison c'était à 15 000 pièces, c'est parce que les publications disaient pas, « Il faut que tu payes tous ces autres frais au-dessus du prix de l'automobile au détaillant ».

Donc, c'est rien d'extraordinaire, c'est rien de nouveau. C'est quelque chose qui existe déjà, puis je pense que c'est quelque chose qui est parfaitement logique.

I was just saying to members, in case they weren't listening to the translated version of my great oratory—I'm just joking, because it wasn't all that great. I just want to say, there's nothing earth-shattering with this particular bill.

First of all, members may remember or may not remember that not too long ago we passed legislation in this Legislature that does similar things when it comes to the automotive industry. There were dealers' associations in Toronto and dealers' associations across Ontario who represent car dealerships who were really mad because some of the dealers would say, "Hey, I got a great deal on a car: \$15,000 for this new car," and they wouldn't list all of the various fees in the advertisement. So I'm a Ford dealer and she's a Ford dealer, and I decide I want to get the customers to come into my place first. She advertises the full sticker price and I would go out and advertise just the basic price without transportation and all the other fees put on automobiles when it comes to the sale. So it was a mechanism by which you try to attract people in the door so that once you got them there, you could sell them the car. Was that fair? Was that right? Absolutely not, because this particular dealer—and I'm pointing to my good friend the member from Nickel Belt—is the honest one, right?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would have been honest.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** She was honest. I know that my good friend France Gélinas would be honest—

**Interjection:** That says something about you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And it says something about me. Exactly. Have you been to my fundraisers lately? That's an inside joke. Honest—but, you know, I'm not afraid of them.

Anyway, so the point is, she was doing the right thing in trying to inform the consumer, "Here's the all-in price when it comes to the sale of my car or truck." I, on the other hand, might be just advertising the base price without all the add-ons.

We passed legislation in this House, and the minister will remember—I think it was under you when you were minister, actually, sir, that we brought in legislation that we supported and we thought made a lot of sense, because now the dealers across this province have to put, in the sticker price, what it costs. I think they don't have to put in the tax, but I think at least they've got to put in all of the other costs.

We still have a problem, because we know we have, for example, that company that sells cars on the Internet, where they're not selling cars—where they're actually advertising the price of the car at a particular price that is not actually the full price. But we can deal with that with amendments to the legislation.

So the member is trying to do something that I think is perfectly logical, and that is saying, "Listen, tell the consumer what they're in for." All they know is, they walk in and they say, "Listen, I want a cellphone," and most people either haven't got the time or the inclination to figure out what's in the fine print, including most of the people in this assembly. If you think we have a monopoly on smartness in this place, I would say that's probably not the case, because I would venture to think that some of us signed cell packages, at one point in our lives, where we got caught in exactly the same web that the member is trying to fix. So I'd just say, we're supportive of that.

The other thing I just want to say: I heard the comments in regard to, "This is like the stripping of collective agreements." Well, it's a little bit of a stretch; come on. I've got a lot of respect for my colleague on this side of the House, but there is a difference here. This is a protection for consumers when it comes to what the sticker price should be. My collective agreement is pretty clear. It says in it, "You get paid so much per hour, and here are the benefits," and everybody knows that there are not three different rates that the employer can hide on you, saying, "You're going to get paid a different rate; I just don't need to talk to you about the other two." The collective agreement is essentially the same concept as the member puts forward. So I thought, very good argument, though. I have to say the member learns quick. He was really trying to make a good point there, but I just wanted to make that point.

I would not be complete in this debate if I didn't talk about cell service in two parts of my riding, because most of you know that if the phone isn't ringing, you're probably in my riding somewhere.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Or mine.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Or France's. There are plenty of areas where there is no cell service—and where there is a fairly large population—in ridings like Nickel Belt, Timmins-James Bay and, I would imagine, Timiskaming-Cochrane and others. I just want to say that we've been doing fairly good work with an organization called NEOnet, which is funded by both the provincial and federal governments, in order to be able to try to increase services in those ridings, and I'm told that as of about



two weeks ago, we can drive up the 144 and we can have a chat with each other on our hands-free—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No. From the watershed, Westree and Shining Tree—dead.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Ah. There we go. See? We've still got areas of blackouts. So I want to say, we still have work to do in northern Ontario when it comes to closing the gap.

But I do have some good news. The community of Val Rita, where there is a great big black hole between Val Rita to about just shy of Opasatika on Highway 11, on the way to Hearst—it's been a pretty dead spot for a long time, and it looks like we're finally moving forward and trying to get that hole filled by cellular service within the next 12 months. So that's good news.

The last point—because I know my colleague wants to speak, and I'm going to do this really fast.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That's fast.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's fast? Okay.

Moose Factory: I've got to tell you, the Moosonee—Moose Factory cell service system is the most frustrating thing I've ever had to go with. Can you imagine: We own a company through Ontario Northland, the ONTC, called the Ontario northern telecommunications corporation. We're the ones who installed the cell service up there, brand new. We just put it in two years ago—no, a year ago—and it doesn't work with anybody else's technology. What is going on? I go up there and, literally, because I have a digital phone, it won't ring. I can't text out, I can't email out, but I can dial out. But it won't ring. So I'm just hoping that one day Ontario Northland is going to finally figure out how to make cell service work on the James Bay, and I'm just talking about the very south tip of the James Bay. It's not even in the James Bay, it's on the Moose River between Moosonee and Moose Factory.

With that, I know my colleague wants to say a few words. I thank you very much for the opportunity to give the speech, and I'm going to stop now so my colleague has the time left on the clock.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's a great pleasure to see you in that chair. As a former member of the rump, I think we're all delighted to see you in such an august position.

It really gives me great pleasure to speak to the member for Sault Ste. Marie's bill today. I spoke on it when he introduced it previously, and in fact I think I've spoken on every single one of the member's bills since I was elected in 2007. I think our new members here, our colleagues, will soon realize that he has put a great deal of thought into each of his bills, and this one in particular, when you see the detail that is comprised within the bill.

I think probably just about everybody has a cellphone story. We've heard that some 81% of Ontarians use cellphones, and I was interested to learn that the Consumers Council of Canada has done a report on the fact and did

some surveys to find that “wireless service is a source of confusion for consumers: 40% of cellphone users are unsure of fees that are contained in their monthly bill.”

Now, normally I would be someone who believes in buyer beware: You look at the product, you analyze whether it's worth the price and you go ahead and make your purchase or not. But this is one, clearly, where it's a little more complicated than buying a new pair of shoes. There are so many options, there are so many hidden fees.

I know in the case of my own family, as my father was in his mid- to late 80s, we decided he really needed a cellphone so that when he went out for his long walks, and as he insisted to continue to do the grocery shopping himself, he would have a phone so he would be able to contact one of us if he didn't feel well, or even perhaps access his physician or some emergency assistance. When it became obvious that he was not going to be able to continue to use the phone—I remember trying speed dials and so on to make it as simple as possible—we looked, finally, into that cancellation fee and we were just astonished at the expense that would be incurred in a situation like that, where he clearly was not going to be able to use the phone for the full three years. So one of the important aspects that the member brought forward is to limit that cancellation fee, that there be simply a 30-day notice and a limit to the cost of the cancellation.

**1450**

Some of the conditions that he's put in this bill are things that some cellphone companies have responded to: as an example, to notify the consumer when they may incur additional charges as a result of exceeding usage limits. I know that, in my own case, certainly I get the message, but some do not. Clearly, we want to level the playing field and ensure that that provision is a mandatory one. In some jurisdictions, I understand that when you reach a certain limit, you will actually have your phone cut off so that you are absolutely sure that you will not use to the extent over your planned budget.

I'd simply like to say in closing that the member has received a number of endorsements. One that I think really summarizes things and I hope will, in fact, result in us passing this bill at second reading is a quote from Mel Fruitman, the vice-president of the Consumers' Association of Canada. He says, “This protection for consumers is necessary and long overdue. We can see no reason why this act would not receive all-party support and be quickly passed.” I certainly hope that that happens a little later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to compliment you on your position today. It's good to see you in that chair.

Anybody who has had the benefit of knowing anybody who owns a cellphone has heard of many problems. I had the challenge of having three students in university who all had them. I think that this bill is important because it



lays out exactly what the charges are and looks at some of the issues that many of our consumers have. As the consumer critic, I think it's important to look at those and work with our members of this Legislature relating to improving the service.

**Cancellation fees:** Anybody with children has heard numerous stories of how the cellphone was damaged, not working, whatever happened to it, and then be forced with some of the charges because you're locked in. I think we just need to clarify that.

We also need to clarify some of the rates. When you're signing up for these things, whether it be a family plan, I think it's important that people know what they're buying, and the length of term. It's a matter of getting an overall good package.

I look at some of the data that's been provided. Our cell rates are certainly not the cheapest in North America; they're some of the more expensive. I know there are some reasons for that. Again, I would like to see some local input into some of the coverage areas. I see some of these towers up—the neighbourhoods have to put up with them, and three miles away from the tower there's no cell service. Obviously, the technology allows for it. It's a blind spot that, with a little help from the cell companies, could cover these areas, because cell service is becoming almost an essential service. Many of the younger generation don't have a land line anymore. So it's important that, in the case of emergencies, the infrastructure is used to its maximum.

I come from a riding with in the neighbourhood of 25 to 30 cell towers, and we have many dead spots very close to these towers. Again, I think that if the cell companies were forced to work with municipalities—and I'm not saying to drive up costs, but where there's infrastructure, trying to leverage it.

We're looking here at an overall package to improve the enjoyment of the cell service to our consumers. It's an important service, it's an essential service and, in many cases, it's the only alternative. So I will be supporting this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your new position. It suits you.

I, too, will be pleased to add my voice to Bill 5, a bill that I think will be very useful. What we have right now is self-regulation of an industry, and the results speak for themselves: Self-regulation does not work. How do I know this? I have statistics coming out of everywhere.

The Commissioner for Complaints for Telecommunication Services, better known as the CCTS, reports that complaints about wireless carriers comprised 52% of the complaints it received in 2009-10. More than half of all of the complaints had to do with cellular phone providers, and 75% of those complaints about post-paid wireless services received by the CCTS fell within the following categories: billing errors; termination disputes—the member sure talked at length about people terminating their contract but still paying for it months

and sometimes years later; and consumer service grievances on terms and conditions, that is, a package that you did not want suddenly gets added on to your bill etc.

The cellular phone service is also the business category for which the Better Business Bureau in Canada has processed the most complaints this year. This is an industry for which self-regulation does not work. Complaints about cellphone and long distance charges consistently appear on the Ministry of Consumer Services's annual list of top 10 consumer complaints. It doesn't matter where you look, if people have an opportunity to complain, they will complain about the contracts that the cellular industry has forced them into. It needs to be regulated, and I think this bill will do that.

What will the bill do? It will clearly disclose the cost of all optional and mandatory services. It will include service agreements in plain language, making them easier for you and me to understand. It will reduce cancellation fees charged to the consumer. It will improve transparency regarding the automatic renewal that sometimes happens when your contract is finished. It will notify the consumer when they may incur additional charges as a result of exceeding usage limits. The member talked about signing on to a package that was supposed to be 20 bucks for voice, data and text and then the bill comes in at \$120—no more of that. It will make costs more transparent when advertising the price, and make sure that you can unlock a device that you own.

Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir d'ajouter mon appui au projet de loi 5, parce qu'en ce moment, l'autoréglementation de cette industrie ne fonctionne pas. Ça ne fonctionne pas parce que, peu importe où on regarde, les gens font des plaintes. Ils font des plaintes en masse et ça ne change rien.

L'industrie essaie de nous dire : « Oh, on a mis en place des nouvelles façons de communiquer avec nos consommateurs qui sont plus claires et plus faciles à comprendre. » Bien, tout ce que j'ai à répondre à ça est : pourquoi est-ce que le nombre de plaintes continue d'augmenter plutôt que de diminuer et que les gens continuent à se faire avoir, quand une compagnie va nous faire accroire que vous pouvez avoir autant les appels, les textos, les courriels, tout ça inclus dans un paquet de 20 \$, mais que lorsque la facture arrive, la facture est vraiment de 120 \$ ? Essayer de te sortir de ça devient très, très compliqué. Je pense que Fort Knox était plus facile qu'un contrat de cellulaire.

Donc, c'est un projet de loi qui est dû. J'espère qu'il sera accepté bientôt. Merci, monsieur le Président.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Oakville.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, Speaker. My congratulations to you on your appointment. You look great up there.

It's a pleasure to join the debate today, and I really want to express my admiration for the member from Sault Ste. Marie, because the private members' bills he brings forward often meet with the approval of the House and turn into good policy that's adopted by the



government or is put forward to benefit the people of the province of Ontario.

In the past, he has brought forward initiatives that have resulted in increased breast cancer screening and spoken to the need for more civility in our society, with the Apology Act. He also brought in a bill regarding second-hand smoke in automobiles, which is something that I think we would all agree we want to see a lot less of.

When he brings forward a bill, I think it's always well prepared, as this one is, and it always speaks to issues in a very practical way that allows you, as a member of either of the parties represented here, to put yourself in a consumer's shoes in this respect. I think we've all made those phone calls—I would imagine we've all got cellphones in this House—where the first thing you hear is, "We're experiencing a period of high call volumes." I don't know when they experience a period of low call volumes, but I haven't met it yet, and I don't think I will. I think you really start to feel that you as a consumer don't stand on an equal footing with the three sort of main providers in Canada.

I think the initiative that's being brought forward today by the member from Sault Ste. Marie allows consumers in the province of Ontario to feel that they do have equal footing when they enter into that contract.

**1500**

Cellphones are a part of everyday life now. I think it is something that is a basic service; it's not a luxury anymore. It's something that we all employ in our daily lives, but for some reason the marketing of that service, the enticement to purchase that product, often has far-reaching ramifications into the contract in the future. Often you don't realize the ramifications until something happens, until you lose the phone or until you want to change your service or until you think you're being charged too much. And when you start to make those inquiries of the phone company or the cellphone company at that time, you realize that at the period when you signed up you didn't ask the right questions, you didn't get the right information, and that information was not offered to you either, or, if it was, it was in very, very small print.

Now, if you talk to the cellphone companies themselves, I think they'll tell you that they think they are doing a pretty good job, that they've got the best customer service, that their customer service is better than their competitors'. I think it has been raised today by other members that the facts tell a much different story, that complaints over cellphone service in the province of Ontario and in Canada are way up. I think somebody mentioned they were up over 100% this year alone. That tells me that something needs to be done. That tells me that it's not a partisan issue. That tells me that just as an ordinary person in the province of Ontario, you'd like to know you've got protection when you enter into a contract on such a basic service.

I think the advice given today by the member from Sault Ste. Marie is sound advice. As I said earlier, I think

it's practical advice and I think it deserves the support of the full House. I'll be supporting it, certainly, Speaker, and would urge all other members to as well. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from York-Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'd certainly want to echo those sentiments that have already been expressed on seeing you in the chair. It certainly looks like the right place.

I'm pleased to be able to have a few minutes to rise and make a few comments on Bill 5. The member for Sault Ste. Marie has again introduced an interesting bill in this House which deals with a very important, yet in some areas complicated, subject.

I think today comments are in agreement on the fact that we would all say that cellphones are certainly believed by many to be an almost universal necessity, and I always find it amusing when my more urbanite acquaintances can't believe that there are dead spots. Well, there are even dead spots on my way home in northern York region, and so it's a kind of reminder about the fact that the technology, while it's a huge boon to most people, still obviously is somewhat compromised by the fact of the dead spots. The member for Timmins-James Bay, of course, can refer to areas much larger than mine. Nevertheless, I think it's important to note that it's there.

If this bill passes second reading today, we will need committee hearings to hear from consumers' groups on the benefits of the bill. As well, we need to hear from the industry whether this bill would help or hinder the growth of a strong telecommunications industry in Ontario. Therefore, I will be supporting this bill at second reading, because I want to find out more about what it means for consumers and for the industry.

I think there are a couple of principles that we have to look at here in this discussion, and the first one is that we must strongly support consumer protection with clear and transparent rules dealing with wireless phone contracts. Others have mentioned the importance of plain language in contracts and the importance of full disclosure, that you find out what it is in terms of the full price. I think those are extremely important examples of the need for strong consumer protection.

But secondly, we should strongly support an open market for wireless services, allowing individuals to make their own choices in a competitive marketplace that keeps prices low.

There are three issues I would just like to highlight and that others have in some way referred to as well but I think are important points about the bill. The question of the contractual provisions—we've already seen reference made to the importance of plain language. That particular issue has meant that the variances in packages that different providers promote can lead to some difficulty for consumers in terms of comparison-shopping. I think that the efforts on plain language particularly, and full disclosure, will go a long way to making sure that those contract provisions continue.



The second is the danger of patchwork regulatory regimes. The member for Sault Ste. Marie referenced the fact that work has been done in Quebec and is under way in Manitoba. My concern is that we don't want to have a patchwork, and I don't see any indication here that the bill contemplates working towards a common national framework.

Finally, I would just say that the question of the application in this new bill, where the bill would make every wireless contract subject to new regulations, is a concern to me, for two reasons. One is that it appears to contemplate retroactive regulation, which is not usually done—it's usually grandfathered—and I don't want it to be ultimately in a more complex environment than currently exists. I think that would be a contradiction of the purpose of this bill.

From the brief comments I've made, I think it becomes obvious that more discussion and analysis is required, such a process that committee hearings would provide. We all want to do what is best for consumers, but we must make sure that this bill is the best option. We cannot damage the ability of our wireless industry to compete. If we harm the industry, it will only harm consumers in the end.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Eglinton—Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker. You're the first member from Scarborough to ever sit in that seat, so Frank Faubert would be proud.

Anyway, I just want to get to the bill. This bill is very important, and I heard the member stand up and say that this might harm the Canadian telecommunication wireless companies from competing. They don't compete; they're basically a monopoly that works together. They don't compete. This is like the big oil companies. Competition in telecommunications and the cellphone industry? They don't compete, because the CRTC basically holds their hand. They do what they want, and people pay \$60, \$80, \$100, \$200—\$5,000 a month sometimes—for these cellphones. It is just out of control.

Six million, seven million, eight million cellphones in Ontario alone, probably—there are no controls. Everybody complains about hydro bills, gas bills. These guys are getting away with murder and nobody says anything. Thank God the member from Sault Ste. Marie has the guts to stand up to these monopolies and say that we've got to stand up for the consumers of Ontario. We can't allow this to continue.

I hear my Conservative friends saying, "We've got to be careful with this poor industry. We've got to be careful with these poor cellphone companies." The cellphone companies are doing very, very well. They're advertising. They've got young people in a frenzy. What do they have now—these iPhone 4s or something? They're going to shopping malls with their pepper spray, lining up to buy cellphones.

We have to slow it down so that at least the contracts are in simple Canadian Tire English. God forbid that you need a team of Bay Street lawyers to read a contract to

have a cellphone. Try and go through that contract. It is impossible. And every contract is the same, whether it's one of the big three—they all have the same mumbo-jumbo, and we accept that.

Will it cost these companies any money to write a contract in simple English? I don't think so. It will at least allow the consumers to understand what they're signing. And they're not only signing it for themselves; in many cases, as one of the members said, it's for your children and your family. So you can imagine how we could at least save some aggravation by understanding what we're getting into.

1510

Then there's always the bait and switch. Thirty-five bucks gets you a cellphone for life. Then, when you start getting the bills, you basically have a second mortgage on your house almost, because you signed this contract that nobody read. And then you try to get them to explain it on the phone, then you're waiting on the line: "We'll get a customer service person for you." Five, 10 people later, then you get the brush-off and you're back at it again. This bill would at least try to bring some transparency.

I can't believe the former Premier of New Brunswick there standing up and saying that this is going to add cost and more regulation. Well, what kind of cost will it be to the poor telecommunications giants to lower their cancellation fees? What cost will it be to require them to unlock customers' phones? What's the cost there? And what cost will it be to eliminate that bait-and-switch thing with the prepaid phone cards that shouldn't have a date on them—because we did that with the old Christmas card scheme, remember, a few years ago, where you would have a gift card and then they would scam you at the end.

Let's stand up for consumers. Let's not worry about our poor friends in the big monopolies. Stand up for the consumers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Sault Ste. Marie, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Thank you, Speaker. I want to thank the members from Oak Ridges—Markham, Oakville, Eglinton—Lawrence, Prince Edward—Hastings, York—Simcoe, Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Timmins—James Bay and Nickel Belt for speaking to the legislation today.

Folks, clearly we need to get this into committee. I'm certainly interested in seeing a national framework. In the absence of that, we cannot allow the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association, which has basically brainwashed the CRTC to ignore consumers, to not care, like they're in some cozy club in Ottawa asleep at the switch, saying that it's okay to have these types of contracts for consumers. It's unacceptable, Speaker. It's unacceptable, it's price gouging and it's unfair to consumers. We've got the stats. They're right here: 11 countries surveyed. We are the highest by a mile; it's not even close. We need to get these contracts into a level playing field.



I'm certainly happy to see this bill go to committee and see the companies come here and have that discussion with the folks, and also have consumers and consumer association groups come here and have that discussion. The consumer association groups are onside. They support it. One after another after another, they all agree that we need to do something. There is not competition in this sector in Canada. There's the illusion of competition with many brands; the licensing in the spectrum is very, very narrow. There's not competition, and in the absence of that we need to make sure that we protect consumers, who are suffering from ridiculously excessive cellphone rates, cancellation rates and all kinds of other hidden charges, fees and misleading advertising that are playing havoc in this industry.

Folks, I really call on your support today to take action to protect consumers from this price gouging. It's a pocketbook issue that consumers want addressed. The time for action is now. Let's get this into committee. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The vote on Bill 5 will take place later today.

#### LOCAL MUNICIPALITY DEMOCRACY ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA DÉMOCRATIE AU SEIN DES MUNICIPALITÉS LOCALES

Mr. Smith moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to amend the Green Energy Act, 2009 and the Planning Act / *Projet de loi 10, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising in the Legislature today so that my constituents can be heard. I'm here, Mr. Speaker, because as far as the people of Prince Edward county are concerned, what's transpiring on their south shore has gone on long enough.

They have different reasons for being upset. Some are lifelong county residents, fiercely proud of its history and its landscape, and determined to maintain the tranquility of the south shore against industrial development. Some are newcomers to the county. They have made a retirement investment in the region as a place where their grandchildren can visit them. Their real estate values are crashing because of the proposed development on the south shore.

There are citizens concerned about the long-term health side effects from these turbines as well. They've sent countless studies to my office to make me aware of what the emergency room in Picton could be dealing with, should these turbines go in. There are naturalists who monitor the designated important bird areas on the south shore of Prince Edward county. The examples set by California and nearby Wolfe Island are telling in this

regard, as rare bird fatalities have skyrocketed in these jurisdictions.

Because he's so popular with members on the government side of the House, allow me to quote Dr. David Suzuki in regard to the placing of these turbines in important bird areas: "... we've got to choose our sites so that we don't endanger wildlife. If there are aesthetic reasons, we've got to take that into account. If there are setbacks that are needed, we've got to take that into consideration."

I'm not here as a naturalist or a retiree. I'm not here as a lifelong county resident or a health care professional from Picton. I'm here as their representative, because for a very long time, Mr. Speaker, there was no one bringing the voice of Prince Edward county to this chamber.

Several of my colleagues are set to speak later today, because this issue goes far beyond the borders of Prince Edward county. On Ontario's beautiful west and south coasts, these massive industrial wind factories are pock-marking the landscape. Fortunately, we don't have any yet in Prince Edward county.

A farmer can't erect a barn on his property in North Hastings without jumping through nine kinds of municipal and provincial hoops. The municipality of Centre Hastings, in my riding, has been battling the Ministry of Transportation for months to get a McDonald's put in at the intersection of two major provincial highways. Wind developers, however, aren't required to get municipal permits, petition to change municipal plans or work within municipal bylaws. To justify the out-of-control spending and unrealistic notions of this government, they've given wind developers and solar developers the ability to bend, break and ignore municipal bylaws in a way that many other businesses would be whacked rather severely for.

Mr. Speaker, if there was an industrial park going in on the south shore of Prince Edward county that was the size of the proposed Gilead and White Pines developments, with the same health and environmental concerns, not only would the municipality of Prince Edward county be justified in forcing them to comply with municipal bylaws and permits, but the provincial Ministers of Health, the Environment and Municipal Affairs would be in an uproar in this very chamber.

There are more than a dozen municipalities in my riding, and from the south shore of Prince Edward county all the way to Hastings Highlands, the message of my municipal counterparts is the same: They want their planning authority back so that they can deal with the green energy nightmares imposed on them by the government in the same way that they would deal with any other industrial project.

Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of renewable energy projects that those municipalities want. There are files on the Marmora pumped storage facility—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Good project.

**Mr. Todd Smith:**—great project—Bancroft Light and Power and Bancroft biomass, which have sat on a desk at the Ministry of Energy for the last eight years.



Those facilities are going to create real, high-paying jobs for the people of Marmora, North Hastings, Centre Hastings, Peterborough—the list goes on and on.

We're talking about three facilities that together will create more than 200 jobs. Even the most ideal estimates surrounding the wind factory plan for Prince Edward county state that the project will create maybe eight jobs. It's tough to understand why a government that keeps crowing about its job creation numbers doesn't realize that 200 is bigger than eight.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But they have trouble with numbers.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I know they do.

The government will call this NIMBYism. They'll try to convince citizens with a right to be environmentally conscientious that this will lead to municipalities en masse rejecting renewable energy projects. They'll do that because that's the history of this government: destroy, denigrate and flat-out deny.

That's not what my bill accomplishes. This bill just allows a municipality to maintain setbacks from the road so that they aren't creating a visual obstruction and a traffic hazard. This bill allows a municipality to draft an official plan for these projects so that wind developers aren't killing endangered birds en masse on the south shore of Prince Edward county.

1520

This bill makes sure that the legitimate health concerns of citizens can be expressed to their municipal council and that council can then actually do something about it.

I'm imploring my colleagues in this chamber to act in the best interest of local democracy. When these developers leave these communities, they're leaving a legacy that damages the landscape forever and endangers the health of those who have to literally live in the shadow of the turbine. These people will have to live with the consequences. They ought to have a say in the decision.

Yesterday, the Ministry of the Environment put the Gilead Power project for the south shore of Prince Edward county on registry. Just consider that for a second: The Ministry of the Environment is promoting a project—I wish the minister were here. The Ministry of the Environment is promoting a project that will kill rare birds—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Excuse me. I would remind the member that you're not supposed make any indication that someone is not here.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you. I'll take that into consideration.

The Ministry of the Environment is promoting a project on the south shore of Prince Edward county that will kill rare birds. It will sabotage the habitat of endangered species and forever mar the landscape of Prince Edward county. Why is this ministry doing this? They're doing it to protect the environment. That's what they say. Allow me to speak for the people of Prince Edward county when I say that they could do without this government's idea of protection.

As I've said previously, this issue does extend far beyond my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues who are also dealing with this issue in their ridings. But allow me to just broaden the scope slightly and leave the shores of beautiful Prince Edward county for a moment.

A package was sent from my office to the members this week. In it, I'm proud to say, this bill had the proud support of the mayor of Bancroft. Bancroft is about as far away from the south shore of Prince Edward county as you can get in my riding. So why is the mayor of Bancroft supporting this bill? The answer is simple: The mayor loves the idea of conservation and being environmentally conscious, but she wants Bancroft council to have the power to establish setback restrictions from the road in North Hastings. As in many rural communities across the province, narrow roads and rough terrain are enough of a traffic hazard without adding another obstruction at the roadside. Businesses can't put a sign too close to the road without a municipal permit; however, the Green Energy Act, as it currently is written, means that a solar developer has rights that no other business has.

I think our colleagues on the other side of the House forget that our municipal politicians are elected representatives as well. They share a taxpayer with us, they share the same constituents we do, and they expect us to treat them as partners in our democracy. Why, then, has the government allowed the Green Energy Act to turn them into lawn jockeys on this particular issue? This, sadly, is not uncommon when we're talking about the tactics of this government.

I know that there are members on the government benches that have municipalities in their riding that have passed resolutions asking for the very powers that this bill would give them. I know that those members would love to vote with the expressed wishes of their constituents, and I would urge those constituents to remember how those votes were cast today. I'd urge those constituents to have very long memories about how the votes were cast, if they end up living in the shadow of a turbine.

The government has said on many occasions in this House that the economy is in an unstable situation. The economy is indeed in an unstable situation. According to the president of the Brampton Real Estate Board, houses in proximity to industrial wind factories will suffer from the same negative property assessments as those homes which are located in proximity to garbage dumps and quarries.

So what we have is an environmental policy that kills rare birds and destabilizes the habitat of endangered species, we have an economic policy that devalues homes, and we have an intergovernmental relations policy that totally ignores the other affected level of government.

Other members have asked me, "Why should municipalities have any input?" Well, if this government refuses to protect the wildlife in Prince Edward county, then the



government of Prince Edward county should be able to. And if this government refuses to protect the homes and the investments made by these families in their own futures, then the government of Saugeen Shores should be able to. And if the government refuses to treat municipal governments like able partners, then they refuse to acknowledge the democratic franchise in every Ontarian who voted in a municipal election about a year ago.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude my remarks to this chamber by reading some remarks that my friend the member from Beaches–East York made in the last session of this House:

"The screams may not be coming because everybody's got their fingers crossed. I know they've got their fingers crossed: 'Please don't let it be me.' They're just hoping that of the 450 municipalities, it happens to somebody else. But I will tell you, when it happens, as it has to the city of Toronto and the port lands, there are going to be screams. When it happens, Mr. Rinaldi, in your riding, there are going to be screams. In yours, Mr. Lalonde, in yours, Mr. Flynn, and in yours, Mr. Brownell, there are going to be screams when the municipality has no say whatsoever on the siting of energy plants. People are going to wake up and they're suddenly going to start asking why and how this has happened. We're going to be able to point the finger pretty bluntly...."

Mr. Speaker, it's worth noting that of the four members mentioned in this quote by the member from Beaches–East York, only the member from Oakville still sits in this House, and only the member from Oakville had the power project scheduled for his riding cancelled. Amazing.

Mr. Speaker, the screams that the member from Beaches–East York was talking about were out in front of the Legislature today. I'm in the Legislature today to point the finger, as my friend the member from Beaches–East York said we would eventually have to.

I'm urging my friends in the NDP to heed the call of their colleague the member from Beaches–East York and vote for Bill 10 today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Speaker. Well, I'm opposed to this bill, and here's why. Eight short weeks ago, the PCs over there lost the election. One their key election messages was to scrap the Green Energy Act, and they wanted to move us away from dirty coal and—and we want to move to clean energy. So today what they're trying to do is to scrap the Green Energy Act by stealth.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** There's no point of order during debate.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You haven't even heard my point of order. You haven't even heard what I have to ask.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Member from—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Go ahead, state your point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much. You'll shortly be able to tell me it's not a point of order, I'm sure, but at least give me the opportunity to tell you what I'm asking.

The member cannot make statements like that when he knows full well that it's not the truth. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you. Anyway, back with my truthful comments. Look, here's the flaw in the legislation—they were opposed to it during the election. The people of Ontario spoke, and they got 37 seats. Now they're trying to sort of do it by stealth, by nibbling away at it. Here's the flaw in the legislation: There are 444—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** How much did your numbers go up?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Are you going to listen? Speaker—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. David Zimmer:** There are 444 municipalities—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order, please.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** There are 444 municipalities in Ontario. What the bill proposes to do is to give each one of those municipal jurisdictions, in effect, a veto, because they'll have their own approvals process. So what's going to happen then, we're going to have 440 applications by way of appeal, so whoever—you know, the municipality is going to set up their approvals process under this bill, so somebody wins, somebody loses, and the loser ends up appealing it. It's going to be an administrative nightmare.

Here's what we've decided to do. As a part of the FIT review program, which was announced last month, we are in fact looking at a process for more local input and changes that we might be inclined to make to facilitate the approvals process. But we are not in a position to accept a veto by 440 municipalities that is going to create a nightmare patchwork existence throughout Ontario. Nobody will know what's happening.

Now, my friend talked—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Can I ask those on my left—I think that when your speaker had the floor, the House was very quiet—that you would offer this speaker the same opportunity?

1530

**Mr. David Zimmer:** The FIT review process that I've talked about started October 31, 2011—just last month. At the end of that review process, we are going to make, I expect, some adjustments and refinements.

But talk about respect for municipalities: During the election campaign, our promise was to continue with our uploading of expenses from the municipalities to the

province. It's a program that we started a number of years ago. It's about \$1.5 billion; we're \$1 billion into it. The leader of the PC opposition's position—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Get to your point of order quickly.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member is expected to speak to the bill in front of the Legislature. That is the standing order.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** You brought up disrespect for municipalities.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** You brought up disrespect for municipalities. Talk about disrespect for municipalities: We're in the process of uploading \$1.5 billion; we're \$1 billion through the project. The leader of the opposition showed up at AMO and made this commitment. He said: "If we're elected, if we form the government, that's the end of the upload. The municipalities can eat the remaining \$500 million."

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. I would ask the member from Willowdale: Would you please speak through the Speaker to the bill?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Speaker, I was addressing the point that they raised about respect for municipalities.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. The member for Oxford.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** To quote Shakespeare, methinks the lady doth protest too much over there.

Now, let me say a word about the science, because they're over there, trumping up this thing that everybody's in bad shape, that they're going to have terrible diseases and so on. In fact, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health has conducted a detailed study of the health effects of the wind turbines, and she's concluded that there's no causal connection between the turbines and adverse health conditions.

Here's the quote from Dr. Arlene King, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. It's quite clear and specific: "There are no direct links between wind turbines and adverse health impacts."

So now we're back to this point of their so-called wish to empower municipalities. This is the same government, when they held office, that forced amalgamation on municipalities. They did all sorts of things. They stripped the money out of municipalities. They downloaded expenses that the province usually carried—court costs, everything else you could imagine—and downloaded it onto the municipalities.

We want to take back those responsibilities. We're prepared to take back \$1.5 billion. And again, I repeat for the second time: The leader of the PC Party stood—imagine standing in front of AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and saying to the municipi-

palities, "You eat the \$500 million." That's respect for municipalities.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in support of Bill 10, the Local Municipality Democracy Act, 2011, put forward by my colleague Mr. Smith from the fantastic riding of Prince Edward-Hastings. This is an important bill and one that I proudly support on behalf of my constituents in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, some of whom are here today.

The Local Municipality Democracy Act will amend the Green Energy Act and the Planning Act so that local municipalities can return to their traditional planning processes. You see, Mr. Speaker, as a former three-term municipal councillor, I understand and respect our municipal partners and I support the rights and responsibilities of municipalities to pass bylaws and make these important decisions locally.

I've said this before, and I'm certainly not alone in saying that the greatest injustice of the Dalton McGuinty government is that his bureaucrats are here in downtown Toronto, making decisions about where to locate industrial wind turbines in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and throughout the province of Ontario.

The meat of our debate today is that since the implementation of the Ontario Green Energy Act, municipalities no longer have the ability to incorporate specific requirements within their official plans and zoning bylaws as to appropriate locations and setbacks for these types of facilities. It's an absolute disgrace that the government continues to ignore the will of local residents in the 80 elected municipal councils who have demanded that their local decision-making powers be restored.

For Dalton McGuinty and the government of the day sitting here in Toronto to think that they know what is best for a municipality and its elected council is at best arrogant, but more likely is outright wrong.

In my riding, we've already had resolutions passed by many municipalities and we've heard from residents, families and small businesses. All of them are concerned with the lack of input from town councils in regard to these types of facilities.

This bill addresses these concerns and will make sure that our municipalities, our partners in democracy in government, have a voice and a say in how land within the municipality is developed and utilized.

I have been pleased to work with MPP Smith to help with this important piece of legislation. I look forward to supporting this bill here today and encourage all of my colleagues in this House to support the bill today as well. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Thornhill.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Richmond Hill, Mr. Speaker; Richmond Hill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Richmond Hill.



**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in this House to speak on Bill 10, An Act to amend the Green Energy Act, 2009 and the Planning Act.

This act, in essence, is nothing except another attempt from the Conservative Party to kill the green energy initiative of Ontario. When, in 2009, we brought green energy—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would like to ask the members in the opposition benches to offer the member the opportunity to make his presentation. If you noticed, with previous speakers on your side of the House, the House was very quiet. Also, I would like to hear the debate.

Please continue.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2009, when we brought the Green Energy Act to this House and it was passed by this Legislature, the Conservative Party opposed this legislation and they have kept opposing this legislation since then. Even in 2011, in the recent election, killing this initiative became one of the pillars of their platform. We all heard about the stories and also discussions about scrapping clean energy and green energy initiatives. So that's not surprising. This is another initiative on the part of the Conservative Party.

But when you look at this Green Energy Act, Mr. Speaker, this is the second major public policy initiative in the history of energy production in this province since the 1950s, when this province introduced nuclear energy into this province. Since then, as we all know, nuclear energy has become one of pillars of energy production of this province—and not only this province, but around the world. Today, we know that our Candu reactors—made-in-Ontario Canadian reactor technology—are producing electricity on three continents. They are safe, they are reliable and they are also inexpensive.

In the same way, the Green Energy Act is producing energy and will become one of the major sources of energy production in this province for the years to come. Within 18 years, wind energy is going to contribute more than 10% of our energy mix in this province, and it's contributing \$26 billion of investments. We are in the process of creating a new industry in Ontario, a green energy industry, an industry which didn't exist in the past.

We are getting rid of coal-fired plants in the province of Ontario. Before 2003, 25% of our energy came from burning coal. Now, coal consumption has been reduced to only 3%. So we are making progress in that area.

I urge every member of this House to oppose this legislation because this is against the interests of this province in the area of energy production. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Perth–Wellington.

1540

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real privilege to speak in the Legislature today.

To those who put their confidence in me, I want to say thank you. I want to assure all my constituents, wherever they live, that I will do my very best on their behalf at Queen's Park. As MPPs, we must never forget one of our most important responsibilities, and that is to speak up for those who believe that the government is not listening to their voices and is ignoring their concerns.

That is what I want to do today in speaking in favour of the Local Municipality Democracy Act. My colleague the member from Prince Edward–Hastings deserves enormous credit for introducing this bill, which would restore local municipal control over green energy projects. This is not a debate about green energy itself; it's about the need for the McGuinty government to start treating its municipal partners with respect and recognizing the critical role in the planning process which is rightfully theirs.

I'm told that no fewer than 80 municipal councils have passed resolutions, motions or bylaws regarding industrial wind turbine development and the Green Energy Act. Those include the townships of Mapleton and Wellington North, the municipalities of North Perth and West Perth as well as the county of Wellington—all in my riding of Perth–Wellington. If the government were to really listen to these municipalities, there would be no good reason for them to oppose this bill.

Over and over again, we've heard that the process governing wind farm approvals lacks openness and transparency. That's what I heard on Friday, November 18, when I met with several of my constituents in Wellington county. They have seen first-hand a process that isn't open, isn't transparent and isn't fair. The McGuinty government's policy is pitting neighbour against neighbour, municipality against municipality, and a great many people against the provincial government.

Here's my position, Mr. Speaker: We must restore the municipal planning authority that the McGuinty government stripped away. That's exactly what my colleague's bill will do, and that's why it has my strong support and the strong support of so many of my constituents. So again I congratulate the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, Todd Smith, for bringing forward this bill, and I thank all of my colleagues who have called on this government to do the right thing.

To all my constituents who believe they haven't been heard, there is reason for hope: I hear you, the PC caucus hears you, and we're going to do what we can to make sure that the McGuinty government finally starts listening.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The Minister of Government Services.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to congratulate you as well. You look really good sitting in that seat.

I am pleased to speak on this bill today. I want to talk a little bit about a great project that was done in my



riding for a green project. Just this past Sunday, Erin Mills United Church invited me to participate in the dedication ceremony for their most recent investment. Under the church leadership—this is one of the first of its kind of project in the city of Mississauga. Under the province's microFIT program, they now own 52 Sharp solar panels. The project took only about nine months for completion, and they went live on November 23. They raised \$70,000 locally to actually do this project. They are now tied to the grid through Enersource Mississauga. This project will not only enable them to meet their own electricity but it will actually make the whole church sustainable too.

Mr. Speaker, really what I want to tell you is that the FIT program is working. It is helping the communities. It's making them stronger. But more importantly, what I want to say to you is that the municipalities already actually have the opportunity to make input into these projects that are carried on in our communities. If we let this bill pass, what will happen is that we will have different rules and regulations applied by different municipalities to actually implement these projects, and that will not be fair. I think it is important for us to have consistent rules and regulations in all municipalities and that they continue to make the kind of input that they make.

I'm very proud of the project that was carried out in my community with the help of the members of the community, and it actually is making the church very sustainable in my community. So I'm actually very, very proud of the way that this FIT program is working, and I will not be supporting this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to speak in support of my colleague the member from Prince Edward–Hastings today. Today he is doing the right thing in debating the Local Municipality Democracy Act. This is not the first time I have spoken publicly about the need to return planning control for renewable energy projects back to municipalities. It has been stripped away by the Green Energy Act, and this is not acceptable.

In just the few days since this bill has been tabled, I have received many emails and letters of support to bring control for renewable energy projects back to municipalities. In fact, I receive emails daily from citizens from my riding of Huron–Bruce—some of them are here today—who are concerned that the McGuinty Liberals and the Green Energy Act have left them without a voice.

I can give you a further example: In Port Elgin, the CAW is erecting a turbine at their family education centre in the centre of the town. This project was given approval six years ago. At that time there were no residential homes surrounding the project. Since then, Port Elgin has grown into a vibrant tourist community and a weekend home to many from the GTA. Six years later, this turbine is now being erected 150 metres away from some of these homes: unacceptable. This is wrong. The

Saugeen Shores council have had their hands tied because they don't have any say, and residents are concerned about the implications this turbine will have in terms of their health.

I am concerned, but don't get me wrong: I am not opposed to renewable energy. However, I'm opposed to these projects being railroaded through communities who are not willing hosts.

Speaker, understandably, municipalities are concerned as well, and they have every right to be. For instance, if wind development continues in Zurich, a small town in my riding, the area will be landlocked and the community will be unable to grow. But then that leads to the fact that the Liberals continue to be out of touch and they don't care.

An example of them not caring is that last year, the previous Minister of Energy met with representatives from the Kincardine council. They expressed the same landlocking concern, and guess what he told them? They were appalled when the minister said, "Rural Ontario isn't growing anymore anyways." How's that for arrogance and turning a blind eye? It's absolutely appalling.

I have seen first-hand in my riding, particularly with the development of wind farms, how communities and families are being torn apart and salespeople for these companies are hustling—and I underline the word "hustling"—landowners and pitting neighbour against neighbour. This has to stop. The evidence that rural Ontario wants their voice back was heard loud and clear on October 6. It was also observed and recognized by the PC caucus on the front lawn of Queen's Park today. I was very proud to see rural and urban Ontario standing together to send a message to the McGuinty Liberals. My question, Mr. Speaker: Are they going to receive it or continue to ignore it?

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker, and a pleasure to be here today to debate this matter.

Speaker, I stand to speak against this bill. We owe it to ourselves, to our children and our grandchildren to rebuild Ontario's economy. We need to bring back manufacturing. We need to give people hope again that they will be able to get good jobs. This bill will block that economic development.

We need action to avoid dangerous climate change, to make sure that we have clean air to breathe in this province—

*Interjections.*

1550

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** If the behaviour continues and I can't hear the speaker, we may have to be here for a long time. I've asked all of you to allow the presenter to present so we can all hear it, and I would like to hear it, too. Please.

The member from Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker.

This bill doesn't do the things that Ontario needs to build greater acceptance of green energy. This bill does



not provide for improved consultation. This bill won't increase community ownership of renewable power. This bill hands a veto on green energy development to local councils—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's always nice to know that other members are listening when I speak, Speaker.

Councils will be bombarded with attacks by well-funded lobby groups to stop the development of renewable energy. Ultimately, this bill will be used to slow down and stop the development of green energy in Ontario, it will slow down and stop action that needs to be taken on climate change, and it will slow down—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** To the opposition party: I would say once again—you know, during this entire week I listened to every one of you on the opposition benches talking about co-operation and working together, and you were praising your friends over in the third party. So—

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** He's missing the mark on this one, Speaker. He's missing the mark on this one.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Speaker, the clock.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Can we reset the clock?

The member from Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This bill will not give us the new industrial jobs that the people of this province so desperately need. This bill is a step backward, and the NDP opposes it.

Ontario depends for its very existence on a supply of energy. Total spending on energy in this province exceeds \$40 billion per year; that's over \$100 million per day. Every year, billions of those dollars flow out of this province into other economies, into other jurisdictions. That means that billions of dollars go to build other people's economies and not ours. That means we have less money in Ontario, fewer jobs and diminishing prospects.

When the Liberals commit to diesel trains instead of electrification of the GO system, they ensure that we have to import fossil fuel energy to get around. My colleagues Jonah Schein, Cheri DiNovo, Rosario Marchese know that we have to build Ontario's economy by generating and using made-in-Ontario energy. The Conservatives and the Liberals don't know that.

We can look at other examples in the economy. Just this week, we called for the processing of chromite in this province, not shipped abroad, because we knew domestic use of domestic resources created jobs and built our economy. When we support agriculture in this province, when we support our farmers and our food processors, we keep jobs and wealth here in Ontario—domestic production, domestic food, domestic jobs.

The reliance on energy from Alberta, the Middle East and the United States is a huge drain on our economy, and it can only be reversed by exploiting our domestic energy sources: the sun, the wind, water, the heating and

cooling beneath our feet, those vast stores of energy that need to be exploited here in Ontario with renewable energy. We need made-in-Ontario energy, and it's going to be renewable energy.

A made-in-Ontario energy policy means more jobs and more wealth. For autoworkers in Windsor and the GTA, it means working in plants retooled to make components for wind turbines and solar panels. For electricians and labourers, it means construction work. For steelworkers, it means making the steel for wind turbine towers. For farmers, it means income. All this is critical. This bill undermines domestic energy, it undermines jobs for Ontarians and it undermines our prospects for a bigger economy. It needs to be defeated.

Speaker, when we talk about energy, there are those who argue for a non-renewable energy path forward. Let us be clear about the other generation options.

Burning coal kills people. Air pollution from coal plants has been identified by the Ontario Medical Association as a direct contributor to deaths in Ontario. We don't need to debate that. All three parties in this Legislature are now committed to shutting down coal.

Nuclear power generates waste that we will have to pay for and store for many thousands of years, beyond the lives of our great-grandchildren and their great-grandchildren. By continuing to invest in nuclear power rather than green energy, we are saying to countless future generations, "We had a great time. Good luck with the toxic waste."

We say to you that when we look at the health impacts of the different sources of energy, we find far fewer health and environmental impacts from renewable energy. In 2009, researchers at Stanford University concluded that wind had the least impact on human health, water supply, land, wildlife and water pollution. A September 2009 report by Dr. Ray Copes, director of environmental and occupational health at the Ontario Agency for Health Promotion and Protection, concluded, "There is no scientific evidence, to date, to demonstrate a causal association between wind turbine noise and adverse health effects," though it sometimes may be "annoying to some which may result in stress and sleep disturbance." I say to you, Speaker, that that is true in this very city we're in today from traffic noise and the noise of air conditioners.

The World Health Organization considers that renewable power has the least impact on human health, compared to other power generation options. If we want to build an environmentally sound electricity system, we need to build a renewable electricity system. This bill undermines that purpose.

Speaker, this bill is before us today because the Conservative Party rejects renewable energy. This bill does not give power to municipalities to address the siting of gas-fired power plants. In fact, the power of municipalities to do this has been taken away. Did they forget about that? Was that not part of their calculation when they said, "Let's give the power to municipalities"? Clearly not. Their target is green energy. Does it give



municipalities the power to reject nuclear power plants? Clearly not.

When I brought forward a private member's bill to stop the construction of a gas-fired power plant in York region, this caucus voted against that private member's bill. They do not support municipal concerns when they are in favour of that kind of power generation. The target of the bill is clear.

This bill is also here today because the Liberal leadership is not willing to take the actions needed to build acceptance and support for renewable energy. During the debate on the Green Energy Act, the Liberals ignored NDP amendments to ensure that renewable energy projects were publicly owned, community owned, municipally owned. They ignored the experience in Germany and Denmark that local community ownership dramatically changed public acceptance of renewable power projects. They didn't provide the funding to promote community control or provide access to capital. They didn't act to ensure that community and publicly owned power would be a dominant part of the mix, actions that would have made support for green energy far more profound than it is today.

The Liberals have not monitored the consultation process in Ontario. When developers have not followed best practices, they have not addressed that. Thus, they've undermined the credibility of green energy. They have not paid attention to developers who played games with the project.

1600

In Essex county, a solar developer put in 42 solar panels and pretended that they were microFIT projects, when in fact it was one contiguous power plant. They got a bonus in terms of payment. They didn't have to go through approvals. They undermined green energy and the Liberals have turned a blind eye on that. They have turned a blind eye.

Speaker, the New Democrats want an electricity system that responds to the needs of Ontarians, that is democratically controlled. We want industrial development that gives people decent-paying jobs.

This bill will not do that. It will instead lead to a suffocation of green energy projects in this province. It will pave the way for more gas-fired power plants like the one proposed for York region and the one cancelled in Oakville. This bill will not answer our environmental or economic needs. This bill deserves to be defeated today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak to the bill from my honourable colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings.

My riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex is a rural riding, and it's been subjected to a significant number of industrial wind farm developments. Currently, there are hundreds of turbines erected in my riding, with hundreds more in the proposal and approval process. I can assure you that while going door-to-door during this past

campaign, the issues surrounding wind installations were top-of-mind issues with my constituents.

First of all, many residents are concerned about the health impacts of industrial wind developments. They are concerned because the proper protocol of studying the potential effects these installations have on human health was not followed.

Secondly, they are concerned about the very real prospect of diminished property values. We have realtors telling us that properties adjacent to turbines have sold for between 20% and 40% less than comparable properties out of sight from turbines. A spokesperson from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs admitted that the ministry had no studies or information about the potential impact wind turbines are having on rural property values. They don't seem to care.

Thirdly, I spoke with a local agricultural consultant. He, too, was concerned about the impact of these green energy installations. He told me that in his field there is growing evidence that low-frequency vibrations created by industrial wind farm installations are adversely affecting the reproductive capabilities of livestock. Such a decrease will significantly impact farmers' livelihoods in my riding and across Ontario.

I'm here today because the people of Chatham-Kent said, "Enough is enough." They don't support Dalton McGuinty's view that he knows better than local officials.

I encourage you all: Think clearly, think hard on the fact that you must vote in support of Bill 10.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member from Prince Edward-Hastings, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can't believe it. We've been debating this for an hour. There have been reasonable claims. There have been many, many people that have signed petitions. They've written letters. Surely they've blasted emails to all of the members on the government side—and I know they've blasted many emails out to former members of the government side. I can count four ministers that are gone because of this, and I really worry about the current Minister of Energy. I really worry about this.

We just had an election where that side was downsized because they weren't listening to the people of Ontario. There are people here today. There are mayors here today. Mayor Joyner of West Lincoln is here and Mayor Jeffs of Wainfleet, and Councillor Robert Quaiff from Prince Edward county is here today, because they're concerned about what is happening in their communities and the lack of listening that's occurring on the other side. People are getting sick. This doesn't make economic sense. You can keep throwing bags of money at people if you want, but it doesn't make economic sense. The health impacts are real. The environmental concerns are substantial. Property values are going down. It's having an adverse effect on jobs. It's not creating jobs.



And for the member from Toronto–Danforth to say that we don't support green energy goes to show that he wasn't listening to anything I said, because we have renewable energy projects sitting on a shelf here at Queen's Park that haven't been acted on for eight long years—real renewable energy projects. Renewable energy projects will create real jobs for the forestry industry. Maybe you didn't hear me: real jobs in the Marmora pumped-storage project. And I know communities across Ontario have green, renewable energy projects in their community.

It's time to listen to the people of Ontario, and we can do it today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The time provided for private members' business has expired.

#### ONTARIO ONE CALL ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR L'ONTARIO ONE CALL

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We will deal with the first ballot item, number 4, standing in the name of Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Bailey has moved second reading of Bill 8, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Speaker, I move that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Agreed? Agreed.

#### WIRELESS PHONE, SMART PHONE AND DATA SERVICE TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE DES SERVICES DE TÉLÉPHONE MOBILE, DE TÉLÉPHONE INTELLIGENT ET DE TRANSMISSION DE DONNÉES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Orazietti has moved second reading of Bill 5, An Act to provide transparency and protection for consumers of wireless telephone services, smart phone services and data services in Ontario.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The bill shall be referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

**Mr. David Orazietti:** I move that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? I heard a majority. So be it.

#### LOCAL MUNICIPALITY DEMOCRACY ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA DÉMOCRATIE AU SEIN DES MUNICIPALITÉS LOCALES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 10, An Act to amend the Green Energy Act, 2009 and the Planning Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1609 to 1614.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Members take their seats, please.

Mr. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 10. All in favour, please rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonnell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Milligan, Rob E.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia	Yakubski, John
Hillier, Randy	Nicholls, Rick	Yurek, Jeff
Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John	

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. All opposed, please rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dhillon, Vic	Murray, Glen R.
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Dickson, Joe	Natyshak, Taras
Balkissoon, Bas	DiNovo, Cheri	Orazietti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Piruzza, Teresa
Bentley, Christopher	Forster, Cindy	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gravelle, Michael	Sandals, Liz
Best, Margaret	Hoskins, Eric	Schein, Jonah
Bisson, Gilles	Jaczek, Helena	Singh, Jagmeet
Broten, Laurel C.	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Cansfield, Donna H.	MacCharles, Tracy	Tabuns, Peter
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Coteau, Michael	Marchese, Rosario	Taylor, Monique
Craitor, Kim	Miller, Paul	Wong, Soo
Damerla, Dipika	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Delaney, Bob	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 32; the nays are 45.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negated.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands recessed until Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1617.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	









## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Tiger Jeet Singh Foundation</b>	
Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....	269
<b>Community centres</b>	
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	269
<b>Journée mondiale du SIDA / World AIDS Day</b>	
M. Shafiq Qaadri.....	269
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	269
<b>Bruce Crozier / Pat Hayes</b>	
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	270
<b>Baxter Corp.</b>	
Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	270
<b>Durham region</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	270
<b>Churchill Trojans</b>	
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	270
<b>Ability Online</b>	
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	271

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	271
<b>Municipal planning</b>	
Mr. Steve Clark.....	271
<b>Diagnostic services</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	271
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	272
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Michael Harris.....	272
<b>Crematoria</b>	
Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	272
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Rob Leone .....	272
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	273
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Michael Harris.....	273
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	273
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	274

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Ontario One Call Act, 2011, Bill 8, Mr. Bailey, Mr. P. Miller / Loi de 2011 sur Ontario One Call, projet de loi 8, M. Bailey, M. P. Miller</b>	
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	274
Mr. Paul Miller.....	275
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	276
Mr. David Zimmer .....	276
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	277
Mr. Kim Craitor .....	278
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	278
Mr. Paul Miller.....	279
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	281
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	281
<b>Wireless Phone, Smart Phone and Data Service Transparency Act, 2011, Bill 5, Mr. Orazietti / Loi de 2011 sur la transparence des services de téléphone mobile, de téléphone intelligent et de transmission de données, projet de loi 5, M. Orazietti</b>	
Mr. David Orazietti .....	282
Mr. Todd Smith.....	284
M. Gilles Bisson.....	284
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	286
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	286
Mme France Gélinas .....	287
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	287
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	288
Mr. Mike Colle.....	289
Mr. David Orazietti .....	289
<b>Local Municipality Democracy Act, 2011, Bill 10, Mr. Smith / Loi de 2011 sur la démocratie au sein des municipalités locales, projet de loi 10, M. Smith</b>	
Mr. Todd Smith.....	290
Mr. David Zimmer .....	292
Mr. Monte McNaughton .....	293
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	293
Mr. Randy Pettapiece .....	294
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	294
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	295
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	295
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	297
Mr. Todd Smith.....	297
<b>Ontario One Call Act, 2011, Bill 8, Mr. Bailey, Mr. P. Miller / Loi de 2011 sur Ontario One Call, projet de loi 8, M. Bailey, M. P. Miller</b>	
Second reading agreed to .....	298

<b>Wireless Phone, Smart Phone and Data Service Transparency Act, 2011, Bill 5, Mr. Orazietti / Loi de 2011 sur la transparence des services de téléphone mobile, de téléphone intelligent et de transmission de données, projet de loi 5, M. Orazietti</b>	
Second reading agreed to.....	298
<b>Local Municipality Democracy Act, 2011, Bill 10, Mr. Smith / Loi de 2011 sur la démocratie au sein des municipalités locales, projet de loi 10, M. Smith</b>	
Second reading negatived .....	298



## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 1 December 2011 / Jeudi 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

#### Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan

Mr. Michael Prue .....	249
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	256
Mr. Rob Leone .....	256
Ms. Cindy Forster .....	256
Mr. Michael Coteau .....	257
Mr. Michael Prue .....	257
Second reading debate adjourned.....	257

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Steve Clark .....	257
Mr. Monte McNaughton .....	257
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	257
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	258
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	258
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	258
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	258
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	258
M. Grant Crack .....	258
Mr. David Zimmer .....	258
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	258

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Apprenticeship training

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	258
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	258

#### Municipal planning

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	259
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	259

#### Taxation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	260
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	260

#### Taxation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	261
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	261

#### Municipal planning

Mr. Todd Smith.....	261
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	262
Mr. Steve Clark .....	262

#### Aboriginal housing

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	262
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	262

#### Anti-bullying initiatives

Mr. Michael Coteau.....	263
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	263

#### Workers' compensation

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	264
Hon. Linda Jeffrey .....	264

#### Health promotion

Mme France Gélinas .....	264
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	264

#### Renewable energy

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	265
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	265

#### Hydro transmission

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	265
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	265
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	266

#### Doctor shortage

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	266
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	266

#### Pan Am Games

Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	266
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	267

#### Municipal planning

Ms. Laurie Scott.....	267
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	267
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	267

#### Aboriginal rights

Mr. John Vanthof .....	268
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	268

#### AIDS treatment

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	268
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	268

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	268
Mr. Rob Leone .....	268

*Continued on inside back cover*



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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 5 December 2011**

**Lundi 5 décembre 2011**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Dave Levac

**Clerk**  
Deborah Deller

**Président**  
L'honorable Dave Levac

**Greffière**  
Deborah Deller



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 5 December 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 5 décembre 2011

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** In the gallery, I have Rej Picard, Jan VanderHout, Don Taylor, Tamara Stokes, William Ravensbergen and Gerard Schouwenaar; and I hope all the members will attend the reception in room 228 following question period and enjoy great produce from Ontario's greenhouses.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my pleasure to introduce the family today of page Tara Collins. I have Geoffrey, her father; Anjani, her mother; and Asha Collins, who was a page here in 2008. A warm welcome to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add my welcome and would implore all members of this assembly to welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance as well. They are here bearing gifts, which is a traditional thing that they do every year, and I've been asked to remind all members of the House to pick up their coupons for their poinsettias and greenhouse vegetables at the whip's office and to join us in rooms 228 and 230.

One of the guests, Mr. Speaker, Jan VanderHout, who is the father of page Daniel Vander Hout, is here today, and Nellie Vander Hout and Grace Vander Muellen and other family members are in the gallery. Welcome, all.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to introduce today my special niece, Aleksandra Windsor, from the great riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, and also my wife, Kate Bartz. Thank you.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I would like to welcome to the Legislature today the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and the 145,000 students they represent. They are here for their student advocacy conference until December 7. I hope members will take time to meet with them. I also thank them for the great work they've been doing to make our education system more affordable and more accessible.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to introduce the family of page Sam Knechtel, and friends: Jo Anne Knechtel, Clare Knechtel, Michaela Knechtel, Julia Campbell and Mag Feeney. Welcome.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** It is my pleasure to welcome the executive of the Canadian Association of South Asian Lawyers, in short, CASAL. Present in the east members'

gallery are Joga Chahal, the president; Parm Prashad and Raj Sharda, senior vice-presidents; Dhaman Kissoon, Muhammad Alam and Dr. J.S. Mangat, directors; and Shameela Chinoy and Kiran Grewal, members. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** In the members' gallery east, rejoining us today is a page from 2009, Vanessa Van Decker, and her mother, Maureen Madigan. Thanks for joining us.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to introduce, in the members' gallery today, from my riding, Connie Graham and her daughters Jackie and Angie, and their special guest, Amanda Nogueira. Amanda is a high school exchange student from Brazil who is part of the Rotary exchange program through the Kitchener Rotary Club. I want to welcome them on behalf of all of us here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions?

There being no further introductions, it is now time for oral questions.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, for nearly a year you have told Ontarians we are recovering from the global recession, made excuses for ballooning spending and defended increasing the size of your government. But you aren't fooling anyone. We have been telling you for the past eight years that real change is needed to get Ontario back on a strong economic footing. Our party has made a series of recommendations that would help you put your house in order and stimulate the economy. You invited that, encouraged it.

We have three days left before winter break. Premier, when will you finally put your money where your mouth is and take some constructive action to get Ontario out of the mess you've gotten our province into?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'm pleased to take the question from my honourable colleague. We are all ears when it comes to good proposals that will serve to strengthen our economy, create jobs and do so in a way that does not compromise our highest priorities on behalf of families, which are their schools and health care.

Having said that, there are a number of—in fact, there are two specific, practical initiatives before the Legislature. One is our healthy homes renovation tax credit. We know that will create some 10,000 jobs on an annual



basis. It will create \$800 million in economic wealth every single year. That's a practical matter before this Legislature and I would ask, and in fact I would encourage, my honourable colleague and his colleagues to support this very specific, practical measure in this Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Premier, since the election in October you have claimed to be open to input from this side of the House. The reality is that you and your caucus shoot down everything that is not Liberal. In debate last week, the member from Oakville told me your party had won, period.

Since you are not willing to listen to the PC caucus, listen to those who, unlike your government, are creating jobs in Ontario. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce represents 60,000 businesses and has made four recommendations to reduce government spending, including restraining public sector salaries. Speaker, since the Premier and his government refuse to listen the PC caucus, will they listen to Ontario's business community and finally put an end to their preferential treatment of government employee unions at the taxpayers' expense?

1040

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We're very open to any suggestions for the budget that we will present in this House next year.

But on the matter of wage restraint, I think it's important to understand what the facts are. We froze pay for two years for the non-union sector, and since our last budget, let's take a look at what's happened to wage settlements elsewhere. Our wage settlements have averaged 1.5%; the private sector in Ontario, 1.9%; the federal public sector, my colleague's cousins in Ottawa, 1.7%. So, in fact, the method that we have adopted is securing the lowest wage increases, the lowest settlements in Ontario. That's why I would encourage my honourable colleague to take that into account.

Of course, we're very much interested in what he has to say, as well as the chamber of commerce.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Ontario's business community urging the government to rein in spending on government salaries should come as no surprise. Our party has repeatedly recommended that to this Premier and to this finance minister, and clearly this government has no intention of listening to the opposition or to Ontario's business community and has no intention of cutting spending and stopping the increase in public sector salaries.

If they are unwilling to listen to us or to organizations like the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, one can only wonder whom this government is listening to. Maybe it's the unions whose members earn 27% more than Ontarians doing the same work as in the private sector.

Would the Premier be listening to us if he were paying us a consulting fee?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** On a serious note, Speaker, I think it's important for us to take just a moment—I know

these are challenging times; the global economy is characterized by tremendous uncertainty. But just at the end of last week we learned that in the month of November full-time employment in Ontario increased by 31,800 jobs; the unemployment rate has dropped 0.2 percentage points, to 7.9%; we are now up 283,400 net jobs above the recessionary low in May 2009; we're recovering more than half of the new jobs in the country. I think that's some indication that we are in fact on the right track here in Ontario.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Premier. For several weeks now, the Ontario PC Party has been calling on your government to implement a public sector wage freeze. A freeze, if implemented, would save \$2 billion over two years.

Premier, Ontarians know that in difficult economic times such as we're facing, some sacrifices need to be made, and if jobs can be preserved, then increases can temporarily be foregone. Yet, you continue to insist that a public sector wage freeze cannot be implemented, legally or constitutionally, despite the fact that freezes have been implemented in other provinces. Upon what basis do you make this argument, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, again, as the Premier pointed out in the last question, since the implementation of our policy, average settlements in Ontario have been 1.5% versus 1.7% in the federal government and 1.9% in the private sector. So in fact it is having some effect.

We will continue to make the kinds of investments we have made, the kinds of investments that created thousands of new jobs last month and that have brought employment back to levels not seen since before the downturn, and will continue to make the kinds of investments and decisions that will help shape a better future for Ontarians.

That's what it's about, Mr. Speaker, and we're committed to making it work for all Ontarians, through investments in education and health care, as we get back to balance over the coming years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The question is really about the legality of the public sector wage freeze. To get back to that, in a 2004 Supreme Court ruling, the court held that infringements of section 2(d) of the Charter can be permitted by section 1 on the basis of pressing and substantial fiscal circumstances. The ruling states that "the courts cannot close their eyes to the periodic occurrence of financial emergencies when measures must be taken to juggle priorities to see a government through a crisis."

Premier, I'm sure you're familiar with this case, so why do you continue to insist that this government cannot constitutionally legislate a public sector wage freeze?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, through you to the opposition, I'd like to remind them that there's no

legislated public sector wage freeze in British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick or Quebec.

All provinces in Canada are bound by the same constitutional protections for collective bargaining. Government interventions through legislated wage freezes are subject to judicial scrutiny.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me add some more facts. The member opposite can yell and grunt and do whatever he's doing, but let's just look at the facts.

Ontario's public sector average annual wage increase is less than or equal to Prince Edward Island at 2%, New Brunswick at 1.5%, Quebec at 1.6%, Manitoba at 1.5%, Newfoundland at 5%, Saskatchewan at 2.6%, Alberta at 2.8%.

We are working diligently to get back to balance as we continue to make the kinds of investments that are needed for—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** There are important facts that the Minister of Finance has failed to mention, such as the fact that for 59 straight months, this province's unemployment rate has been higher than the national average.

Ontario's third-largest expenditure, behind health and education, isn't colleges and universities or roads and infrastructure, but it's spending \$10 billion a year on debt payments. That's \$10 billion in taxpayer dollars being thrown away instead of going into essential services.

Premier, if the Supreme Court recognizes that \$2 billion can be saved to see us through this crisis, the people of Ontario deserve to know why you're choosing not to implement a public sector wage freeze.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the member opposite that last month Ontario's unemployment rate went down and Canada's went up.

They use a lot of numbers out of context. Last month, they told us about 100 jobs an hour are being lost, which really demonstrates why their credibility is so shaky.

Let's look at it this way: In November, Ontario gained 45 new full-time jobs per hour. Since January of this year, we gained 16 jobs per hour, and since the recessionary low, 13 jobs an hour. I hesitate to use those numbers because I don't want to be playing with statistics the way they do, as opposed to looking at facts over time.

Steady, responsible leadership involves using facts. It involves making sure you understand the full story and that you work hard for a better future—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## SALARY DISCLOSURE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Speaker, today, news reports show that the Minister of Health couldn't explain why executives at the publicly funded Ornge are not disclosing their salaries to the people who pay them.

Does the Premier know how much the executives at Ornge are paying themselves, and if so, will he tell the people?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** When it comes to Ornge, Ornge has a complicated corporate structure. They have a not-for-profit arm that delivers air transportation for the people of Ontario and, I must say, they do a remarkable job getting people to the care that they need.

They also have a for-profit arm. The Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act specifically excludes the private sector from reporting their salaries, so that is why these salaries are not seen on our sunshine list.

Having said that, Speaker, I have asked for further clarity. I need to better understand why it is that all salaries at Ornge are not covered in the act.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Interestingly enough, Speaker, last year my staff asked why salaries at Ornge were being hidden from the public, and the Ministry of Health said that they knew what the salaries were but they weren't going to tell us.

I want to know if the minister is prepared to tell us what the executives at Ornge are paying themselves, and, if not, why not? It's taxpayers' money that is paying for this organization. Regardless of how good the work is that they do, they still should have their salaries disclosed so that we know what they're being paid.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, let me try again. The not-for-profit company of Ornge that provides air ambulance service and some land ambulance service to the people of Ontario is covered under the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, and those salaries are, in fact, disclosed. There is another organization called Ornge Peel that is a for-profit organization. They are not required, under the act, to report. However, I am looking for more clarity on the corporate structure of Ornge so that I am satisfied that they are adhering to both the letter and the spirit of the law.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, across Ontario, families are being told that money isn't available for front-line care. ERs are being closed and wait-lists for long-term care are growing and growing. Not long ago, you may recall, we learned that hospitals were hiding salary top-ups for senior executives at the Ministry of Health in their budgets. Now we're learning today that an organization doesn't have to report at all that's funded by the Ministry of Health.

Does the minister know how much the executives are being paid at Ornge? If so, will she tell us how much they're being paid? And if not, when is she going to tell us?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, the Auditor General of Ontario has been taking a look at Ornge. He will be releasing an audit in the not-too-distant future.



We are determined to continue to get better value for money. When those auditor's recommendations do come forward, we will be looking at them very, very closely. Transparency and value for money are hallmarks of this government.

### MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is for the Premier. Cliffs Natural Resources say that they plan to ship chromite from the Ring of Fire outside of Ontario, outside of Canada, to be processed. Under the Mining Act, they need permission from this government to do so. Does the Premier plan to allow the minister to simply sign off on shipping that chromite out of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I know that my colleague would like to speak to this, but I'm going to weigh in first and restate something I said before.

My colleague and I opposite have had an opportunity to debate this, I think, on a number of occasions, and we see things differently. Our shared responsibility is to do everything that we can to maximize the benefits of the development of the Ring of Fire for the people of Ontario. But I will not go so far as to erect protectionist walls around the province of Ontario, because there are so many jobs today in Ontario that count on our receiving raw goods from other parts of the world so that we can process those here and then feed our families here as a result of those jobs. So I'm not prepared to go that far, but I am certainly prepared to do everything that we possibly can apart from that to maximize those benefits for the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, people in Ontario and especially people in the north are looking for good jobs that use our natural resources to grow our economy. For days, Cliffs has been making it known that their plan to send our resources away to create jobs somewhere else is in the works.

The minister has the power to do something about it. I want to know: Has this minister actually spoken with Cliffs? Has he given them a signal as to what his plans are?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Speaker, this is an opportunity that this government and the people of Ontario are not going to miss. The Ring of Fire provides the people of Ontario with incredible opportunity in the supply and services industry with regard to mining and job creation, not only in northern Ontario but across Ontario. This is an opportunity that this government isn't going to squander. We're going to ensure that we maximize the job potential that is associated with the Ring of Fire, not only in the extraction but with the rest of the parameters around mining.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, those of us in the NDP caucus are worried that this is going to be an incredibly lost opportunity.

The minister's job is to bring jobs and value-added investment here to Ontario. He spent a lot of time talking during the campaign, but now he needs to do something. Will the minister grant the exemption or fight for good jobs in Thunder Bay and Sudbury? Or is he going to simply keep talking and talking and talking while good jobs get shipped away?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** We, unlike the NDP, aren't going to speak in hyperbole. There has been no application for exemption at all. We are at the beginning stages of the Ring of Fire. We're only at the initial stages of the environmental approval. But what we can say categorically is that we are going to ensure that we maximize the potential of the Ring of Fire for all Ontarians.

We see this as an enormous opportunity to create those long-term mining jobs that each and every one of us in this House should want to create for Ontario. We, as a government, are not going to miss that opportunity.

### MUNICIPAL TAXATION

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. I want to bring to your attention a completely unreasonable treatment of Roselawn Memorial Gardens, an outstanding business in my riding, at the hands of the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. Despite the mountain of evidence proving they face a tax burden unlike any other visitation centre or crematorium in the province, the property tax bureaucrats won't budge.

Instead of waiting until July of next year, when new regulations come into effect, MPAC is running around the province picking and choosing at a whim which cemeteries are taxed and which remain exempt. Minister, will you commit today to get involved and tell MPAC to come to its senses and put an end to this unfair treatment?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the member, I was not aware of that specific circumstance. I will undertake to look into it further.

I would remind the members opposite that the board of directors of MPAC is in fact controlled by our municipal partners, but I will undertake to follow up and look into that situation further.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Minister, you need to understand that Roselawn is one of only two cemetery chapels in Ontario not exempt from taxation. And it gets worse. MPAC has reclassified Roselawn's crematorium as industrial. The basis for this ridiculous decision is that MPAC states the industrial class applies where "a product is changed materially from one thing to another."

With respect, cremation does not change a human body from one thing to another. Minister, do you not agree that what remains following cremation is as much a human dead body as it was before?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, I'll undertake to follow up with the member on that. I first want to see that the

company has made efforts to exercise whatever appeals it has available to it. I'm not aware of that.

What I would like to ask the member, though, is if he will in fact vote in favour of the replenishing of the eastern Ontario development fund, which will create jobs in eastern Ontario. It's interesting that the party opposite has not taken a stand in favour of it, particularly given the fact that many previous Conservative members—I remember that Mr. Sterling, for instance, was a very strong advocate of that; Senator Runciman was a strong advocate of that.

So I will follow up on the member's question. I was not aware of the situation. But I ask you: Support eastern Ontario, support growth and jobs, and support the bill that your predecessor—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question.

### POVERTY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Premier. Today the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction released its annual report on the government's poverty reduction strategy. They indicate that poverty rates have actually risen among adults, that over 100,000 more adults living in Ontario fell into poverty during the first year of the strategy.

So my question to the Premier: Will he assure the House that the government will not make life any harder for the swelling number of low-income Ontarians by cutting programs and cutting supports in the upcoming budget?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question from the third party. I want to begin by saying that we thank 25 in 5 for their report and, in fact, for recognizing Ontario as the only province to have taken concrete action to reduce child poverty

1100

Mr. Speaker, 25 in 5 has been a key partner in the development of our poverty reduction strategy, a strategy we remain committed to, including its goal of reducing poverty by 25% in five years. I thank them for their continued advocacy on behalf of those Ontarians living in poverty.

We can be proud, all of us, that Ontario has a long-term strategy enshrined in legislation which received all-party support. We thank 25 in 5 for recognizing that our programs, such as the Ontario child benefit, investments in child care and full-day kindergarten, and raising the minimum wage, have had—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The concrete action that has resulted from this government's program is 100,000 more adults now living in poverty. Also, a 25 in 5 report shows that food bank use is up 25%, that social assistance rates for single adults have fallen since 2003 and that invest-

ment in affordable housing has fallen 91% from last year; 25 in 5 actually fears that the government will slash spending on housing, social services and income supports in the 2012 budget.

So I ask, Mr. Speaker, of the minister, will he actually promise that struggling Ontarians will not bear the brunt of a fiscal situation that they did not help create? Or will the government continue to give profitable corporations billion-dollar tax cuts?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, this government remains committed to our poverty reduction strategy. I agree that there is obviously much work to be done still, but I want to point out some of the progress that has been made. We raised the minimum wage to \$10.25, a nearly 50% increase since 2003. It has been increased seven times in the last eight years. I'll give you an example: A single parent with a young child working full-time at minimum wage earns \$875 more per month now compared to 2003, and that is a 58% increase.

Now, 25 in 5, their report just published, also reports that the provincial Ontario child benefit has helped pull 19,000 children out of poverty during the recession. We remain committed to this important strategy.

### WAGE PROTECTION

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** My question is for the Minister of Labour. This past July, IQT Solutions Ltd. closed suddenly in Canada. This closure resulted in the loss of 400 jobs in Oshawa in Durham region, as well as the loss of nearly 500 jobs in Quebec. These workers were left without owed wages, vacation pay, termination pay and severance pay.

I understand that one avenue of action for these workers is the federal Wage Earner Protection Program, but the company has not filed for formal bankruptcy, which is preventing many of its former employees from accessing this program's benefits.

Minister, what has your ministry done to help these employees who find themselves without jobs?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'd like to thank the member from Ajax-Pickering for the question. I'm pleased to announce that the Ministry of Labour is supporting the Quebec government in its petition to have IQT Solutions declared bankrupt. In order for the former employees of the call centre in Oshawa to be entitled to benefits, IQT Solutions must be first declared bankrupt. By joining forces with Quebec, we are helping former IQT Solutions employees access the federal government's Wage Earner Protection Program. This program will help former employees recover unpaid wages, vacation pay, termination pay and severance pay. I understand that the petition will be heard in late December 2011.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Thank you, Minister. I'm glad to hear that our Ministry of Labour is working together with the Quebec government to help these employees recover what they are owed.



I understand that employees have also contacted the Ministry of Labour for help under provincial laws. What is the Ministry of Labour doing within its own jurisdiction to assist these employees?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Again, I thank the member for the question. The Ministry of Labour's staff have been on the ground in Oshawa since early summer when we first learned of the layoffs. In fact, in the days following IQT's closure, an employment standards officer attended the workplace to investigate the circumstances surrounding the closure.

My ministry also participated in an information session to ensure former employees were aware of their employment standard rights. Employment standards claims have been filed by some former employees. We've also issued orders to pay against IQT regarding 240 claims.

We will continue to advocate to our federal partners for improved eligibility criteria as well as an increase to benefits from the wage earner protection program. My ministry also continues to encourage the federal government to recognize the vital contribution of the Ontario workers.

#### RURAL ONTARIO

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Premier. Two months ago the people of rural Ontario sent a message that this government wasn't working for them, and it's clear nothing has changed.

We are joined here today by the Ontario Agri Business Association. For eight years, they've been asking your government to classify grain elevators correctly as commercial instead of industrial. Since the grain isn't being manufactured, produced or processed, this change would have a big positive impact on the local businesses and on job creation.

In the Blenheim area, which has been hit hard by job losses, the industrial rate is 22% higher than commercial, and those costs have to be passed on. This is one of the steps the government could take to create jobs in rural Ontario.

Will you provide a written commitment that you will fix the classification of grain elevators to create jobs in rural Ontario, Mr. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the ongoing issue with respect to the classification of these. These are made by the board of MPAC which, I remind the member opposite, is controlled by Ontario's municipalities.

We work with our rural communities. I was very proud of this government's risk management program, which is being implemented as we speak. Unfortunately, the federal government is not participating in that yet either.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of issues on the rural front that we have resolved in the past. For instance, on microFIT energy projects we had to change the Assessment Act in order that the property values

wouldn't go up associated with the installation of renewable energy technologies.

I look forward to continuing the work with MPAC on this particular issue. It's important for the development of rural Ontario, which is such an important part of the Ontario economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: It's clear this government doesn't understand rural Ontario's concerns. We are joined today by the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance. These businesses are ready to invest in their communities. They are ready to create thousands of desperately needed jobs for rural Ontario's families.

The Premier is allowing his Toronto bureaucrats at the OPA to cancel vital projects like the Leamington transmission line, causing costly delays. Premier, why is a transitional agency like the OPA allowed to threaten jobs for rural Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We're very, very interested and supportive of job-creating opportunities in south-western Ontario and throughout the province.

Right now, I know that the Ontario Power Authority and Hydro One are working very closely—very closely—to determine the options to support good business interests. The Minister of Finance has been very, very interested in supporting the greenhouse growers and good job opportunities in the province of Ontario.

The member will appreciate that we need to make sure that not only the ratepayers, but taxpayers are protected throughout—so we want to make sure it's all based on good evidence. That work is under way at the moment. We're very determined that Essex, Windsor, southwestern Ontario and all of Ontario is supportive of our efforts to create jobs—very supportive of that. And as I say, the Minister of Finance has been very interested from a local perspective as well. Good work going on.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Two years ago, Toronto's medical officer of health urged the McGuinty government to only proceed with the Union-Pearson air-rail link if it's electrified in order to prevent an increased risk of asthma and cancer for 300,000 residents.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Who's the minister, please?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** It's to the Minister of Transportation; my apologies.

Some 300,000 people are at risk of asthma and cancer near that line. Why does the McGuinty government continue to ignore this expert advice and put people's health at risk by insisting on using polluting diesel trains on this line?

1110

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I'd like to thank the member for Davenport for the question. The member will know that this government is investing heavily in transit in the

GTHA, including very, very significant projects, such as the Eglinton line and the air-rail link line etc.

The question of electrification is taken very seriously by this government. There are studies that are ongoing with respect to that, but the most important thing is, we're actually doing the air-rail link from Union Station to Pearson airport, which is one of the largest projects in North America in terms of moving tens of millions of people.

We're committed to doing the air-rail link. We're committed, through studies, to look at electrification. That's an ongoing study that we're pursuing at this time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Back to the Minister of Transportation: The government is rushing ahead with diesel trains in time for the 2015 Pan Am Games, but there's no guarantee that trains will be in place for 2015. Athletes and officials won't even use these trains, sir. They will be bused in on dedicated highway lanes, just as spectators could be. Why won't the McGuinty government stop sacrificing people's health and direct Metrolinx to build it right the first time? Go with electric trains now.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know why that party doesn't appreciate the significance of the air-rail link, the Pan Am Games that we're moving forward with, very significant infrastructure projects and economic development projects.

On January 26, 2011, Metrolinx approved the recommendation of the comprehensive electrification study to begin electrification of the Lakeshore and Georgetown GO Transit rail corridors with the new ARL as the first phase. Following this approval, the province directed Metrolinx to start the environmental assessment. The work is proceeding. We can't recreate the world overnight. It's a priority of ours. We're working on it, but we're going to have the air-rail link ready for the Pan Am Games, and we're going to seriously look at electrification.

### SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, my question this morning is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. We've come a long way since 2003 by working together with industry experts to fix the skilled trades and apprenticeships that were left in shambles by successive governments.

The principal recommendation made by Mr. Tim Armstrong to fix the trades industry was to create an institution that would allow tradespeople to have the last word in deciding how they're to be governed. That's why we worked with Ontarians to establish the College of Trades, an industry-driven organization that has equal representation of both employers and employees through the college's board, union and non-union.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has mentioned to me that the work is already under way to ensure that the college will have a balanced approach to governance that considers the needs of employers, employees, apprentices, the

economy and the public. Through you to the minister: How is the minister going to ensure that the College of Trades stays transparent and impartial?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank my friend from Peterborough for the question.

Half of the board of governors are representatives of business. As a matter of fact, this group is so non-partisan and so unbiased that it actually elected a management representative, a former member of this Legislature, a former member of the Conservative caucus opposite, as its chairperson. Mr. Ron Johnson represents the interior design employers' association and represents over 50% of that.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the 34 trades of the 150, of which ratios are being set for, are being set by joint management-labour committees, including representatives of employees in the non-labour sector. It is one of the most impartial and fair-minded processes under way right now in Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Through you to the minister, Mr. Speaker: It's clear the opposition has little interest in working with us while we're fixing the skilled trades and apprenticeships system through the College of Trades. I'm proud that our government is committed to working in the best interest of all Ontarians and Peterboroughians.

Since we've been in government, we have doubled the number of apprenticeships to 120,000. Last year, we created more than 29,000 new apprenticeship positions. While the PC Party was in government, they created less than 15,000 apprenticeships a year and cut funding to the apprenticeship and training programs by 73.4% in the first three years. Our record at skilled trades and apprenticeships clearly shows our commitment to move Ontario and Peterborough forward.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: Can you tell us how it is possible that the Leader of the Opposition has promised he will create 200,000 apprenticeships in just four years?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, that is ironic in some ways, because when they were in power they cut apprenticeships by 74%, a cut to budget. Then their program as they composed it couldn't generate 15,000 apprenticeships per year and they only achieved a maximum number of 60,000 apprenticeships in their entire period in government, which is rather extraordinary.

We already are at 120,000, and we've added 29,000. We believe in the College of Trades, working with industry and workers and colleges. But to meet the 200,000, you would need 50,000 more employers. Right now we have 37,000. There is no budget at all in any of their numbers for college or private sector apprenticeships.

This is the most bizarre proposal to come out: no costing, no explanation of where the 50,000 employers come from, no infrastructure, no budget, no money. In other words—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question.



## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Would the minister advise the House whether he believes it is ever appropriate for a medically fragile 21-year-old with developmental and physical disabilities to be placed in a nursing home?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the member is referring to a specific case. I'm assuming that by the tone of his question and the way that it was put forward, and I would be very happy to look into a case that he brings forward.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a developmental services network of organizations and ministry support throughout the province. They work with individuals and their families to make sure that the person is placed in the most appropriate care setting. As I say, if the member wants to bring forward a particular case, I'd be happy to look into it, but again, the bottom line is finding the most appropriate setting for that individual to receive the care they need.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, I have brought this case to the attention of the minister's office and the ministry on many occasions, but let me refresh his memory. Leslie and Gary Dillon are from Nottawa. Their daughter Jessi is 21 years old and severely disabled. For the past eight weeks, Jessi has been at the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital waiting for support services such as Passport funding or admission to e3 Community Services in Collingwood. Their doctor will not release Jessi from the hospital until support services are available, and unfortunately, none are. Mr. and Mrs. Dillon are concerned that their daughter is going to be forced into a nursing home, something most caring parents would not want for their child.

Minister, you're spending a lot of money to keep Jessi in hospital. Is there not a more dignified way to look after the Dillon family's needs?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this particular case to our attention. Obviously, all of our sympathy and our hearts go out to the family that are finding themselves in this very difficult situation, as well as the child that they're seeking the most appropriate care for.

As I said, I'd be happy to look into the specific case. As members know, as a minister I can't talk about specific cases here on the floor of the Legislature, but what I can do is talk about the commitment of the ministry to work with families and individuals to make sure they receive the type of care that's most appropriate for their circumstances.

I would point out to the honourable member that under our watch, our government has significantly increased the amount of funding that is available for developmental services across this province. We're going to continue to work with providers and with families to make sure that we provide the most appropriate care, and again, I look

forward to looking into this case for the honourable member.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. A number of recommendations that followed the contaminated water tragedy at Walkerton focused on strengthening public health at Walkerton and across the province. Does the Premier think that eliminating services in the community's public health office, with plans to close that local unit entirely, is a good idea?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I'm pleased to look in greater detail into the issue that the leader of the third party has raised. What I can tell you is that we are absolutely committed to having the cleanest drinking water possible. We learned a lesson from Walkerton, and our government has made a very high priority bringing clean water to the people of this province. So I am more than happy to look into the issue that the leader of the third party has raised.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This is a bigger-picture issue, of course. The closure of this public health unit, leaving just one public health office open for an entire region that's larger than the province of Prince Edward Island, is something we see as concerning.

The decision seems to have been made without any transparency, without any information going to the public or any engagement with the public. In fact, the local board of health was not engaged, nor was the mayor even aware that this was in the works.

My question, again, is to the minister: Why is the Walkerton public health office closing, and does she support that move?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, as I said in the initial question, I will look into this particular issue. I think it's important to recognize that public health units are administered by the municipalities; however, I will look into this issue.

We have made a big commitment to public health. In fact, evidence of that is demonstrated by the fact that we have increased funding to our public health units from 50% to 75%. We believe in public health. We believe in making investments to keep people healthy so they don't need to come into our acute health care system.

## ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. This past Saturday marked the International Day of Disabled Persons. The day gives us an opportunity to reflect upon the daily challenges faced by people with disabilities in our communities and upon what we do as a government to support these individuals and their families. The day gives all of us an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to

building an accessible and inclusive Ontario for people with all different kinds of disabilities.

Through you, Speaker, to the minister: How is this government addressing the needs of Ontarians with disabilities and their families to make our province fully inclusive?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I very much appreciate the honourable member's question, particularly on the fact that Saturday was the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. I was pleased, as I'm sure many members of this Legislature were, to attend several events in my riding to mark this day; a day, in fact, when we can celebrate the outstanding contribution made by individuals with disabilities and also talk about some of the progress that we've made as a society.

As a government, I think all members of this Legislature should be very proud of the passage in 2005 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The AODA, as it's known, will help create inclusion for everyone in Ontario, regardless of their ability, so that they can all make a full contribution. It provides for enforceable standards with timelines for compliance in a number of different areas, including accessing goods, services, information, transportation, buildings and employment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you to the minister. We all benefit from the work that is done to make our communities more accessible.

I understand that as of January 1, 2012, a customer-service standard regarding accessibility comes into effect for all Ontario businesses. Some of my constituents in York South-Weston, however, have expressed some concerns that complying with the standards will cost business a lot, and I've also heard that there is some confusion on the requirements.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain what can be done to ensure that businesses implement these standards and what assurances can be made about the costs of these standards to the businesses?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think it's a very important question, and my ministry has been working very hard to inform businesses of their new responsibilities over the standards which, as the member pointed out, will be coming into effect on January 1.

Mr. Speaker, it's about changing culture; it's a way of doing things that's taking into account the needs of individuals with disabilities as you conduct business, as you serve customers. Many of the standards have no costs associated with them. Some specific standards could be: How are you accommodating a customer service dog? Do your employees have proper training so that they can use plain language when helping someone with a developmental disability? Writing down the answer to a question for someone who is deaf or hearing impaired.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, it's about changing the culture. It's about making sure that employers and their employees have the proper training so that they can serve

people with developmental disabilities. It's good for the individual who's coming in, but it's also good for business, something, I think, that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is to the Premier. In 2007, the McGuinty government launched the GTA West Corridor study, saying that they wanted to have a comprehensive study of transportation options through our area.

One of the options they've identified through this process, alternative 4-3, has been rejected by the councils of the town of Halton Hills and the region of Halton, and by thousands of residents.

Just before the election, I called for the GTA West Corridor study to be put on hold pending a review of the whole thing by the next Minister of Transportation. Days later, they announced the delay.

Now we have a new minister. My question to the Premier is this: Will he tell the minister to listen to the people of Halton Hills and take alternative 4-3 off the table?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Wellington-Halton Hills for his question. I acknowledge receiving the letter that he sent to me. We've also had a brief discussion with it. I've also undertaken to provide an MTO briefing for the member, and I understand I'm meeting with the mayor of Halton Hills tomorrow.

We're taking your issue very, very seriously, but of course the member knows that we're trying to meet the demands of our growing population and economy in the GTHA. We're looking at ways to build transportation links between large employment and population centres in the greater Golden Horseshoe and to US markets. There is a study under way, as you're aware. We've also commenced some additional studies. We will take the community's interests very seriously moving forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's interest, but I have to say that his answer will not satisfy my constituents.

A new highway built along alternative 4-3 would cut our community in half, destroy farmland and heritage sites, and have a negative impact on our local environment. The town has identified a reasonable and practical alternative: the widening of the 401, which would have to be a more cost-effective solution in the current constrained fiscal environment that we're in.

Now is not the time for more dithering on this issue. We need a clear and unequivocal answer. Will the Premier assure my constituents that he will put an end to alternative 4-3 once and for all?



**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** We've received a lot of input and comments on the draft strategy and we've heard the concerns from local residents about a new east-west corridor through Halton Hills. In response to the concerns, we will conduct additional analysis and consultation on the highway recommendations in the Halton area. The additional work will examine in greater detail the impacts on farms, rural communities, businesses and natural features. We will bring forward the results for full public review and discussion before any decision on next steps. We take the concerns very seriously. We're looking at them. We will work with the community to try to find alternatives. But we have to wait for the full analysis to take place and I'll continue to work with the member as we move forward with this issue.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Rainy River's health centre serves not only the local town, but also three rural townships and two First Nations communities. This is 2,700 people. It has a 24-hour emergency room, three acute care beds and provides primary care, but since October it has been operating with only one physician. Now the emergency room is expected to close by December 24 because of this doctor shortage.

Speaker, the community has been raising these concerns with the minister for months. Does the minister have a plan to prevent Rainy River's ER from closing?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member for raising this issue that I know is of extreme importance in Rainy River and the surrounding area.

Speaker, we are aware that there has been a resignation of a physician from the emergency department in Rainy River. That is creating problems to keep the emergency department open over the Christmas holidays. I'm very pleased to report that interim coverage has been found from December 23 until January 2. We still, though, do have a few days, the 3rd and the 5th. We are working very hard to ensure coverage to the people of Rainy River.

1130

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Speaker, if the Rainy River ER closes, residents will be facing a one- to two-hour drive to the nearest ER, in Fort Frances. These ERs are already overburdened and understaffed. Officials in Rainy River expect that a permanent closure of the ER would add an additional \$800,000 to ambulance costs.

The community has already been working together to find a solution, but the closure date is looming. Will the minister guarantee that health care services are not lost?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member has outlined the reason why we're working so hard to keep this emergency department open: We know how important it is to the community.

HealthForceOntario works with hospitals across the province who are having difficulty filling those vitally

important emergency department shifts. We will continue to work to complete this job, to find coverage for those two or three days where we're still looking for someone.

The LHIN, the hospital and the ministry are working together, with the common purpose of keeping this most important emergency department open.

### IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, my riding of Richmond Hill is home to many newcomers. When immigrants arrive in our province, many of them rely on settlement services in their community to help them get settled and find a job. Catholic Community Services of York Region is one of the agencies serving Richmond Hill.

Settlement services are especially important in these uncertain economic times, when we need everyone at their best. That's why newcomers in my riding have been raising their concerns about the recent unilateral funding cuts to Ontario's newcomer settlement agencies announced by the federal government. Minister, what effect will these cuts have on Ontario's economic recovery?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you for the question. I agree: Successful integration of immigrants into Ontario's workplace is an economic imperative. That's why we're concerned with yet another round of cuts by the federal government.

Many newcomers rely on settlement agencies to help put their skills to work. I've been meeting with service providers who have shared with me their deep concern about how this year's cuts will affect their clients. I am pleased to introduce Mississauga South community leaders and volunteers Ms. Karen Duffy, founder and CEO of Wellness Direct, and Mr. Winston Meyer, founder and president of Community Door, who are with us today. Thank you for joining us at Queen's Park.

Many agencies similar to theirs are worried that cuts will lead to decreased access to services for newcomers, or, even worse, agencies closing down. It's especially important for us to keep working hard to ensure that all citizens and newcomers have the opportunity to fully participate in our economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I have heard similar concerns in my riding. Last year, when the federal Conservatives cut Ontario's funding by \$44 million, settlement services were definitely affected. Now it seems that the federal government is determined to make the same mistake twice.

Ontario is the only province receiving a cut this year. We are also the only province without an immigration agreement with the federal government. My question to the minister: What is being done to engage the federal government to reach a new agreement?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The member makes a very important point: Ontario is the only province without an agreement on immigration with the federal government.

We're also the only province to be targeted for funding cuts this year. And all the while, Ontario welcomes more immigrants this year than the rest of Canada combined, excluding Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, I had the pleasure of meeting with federal Minister of Immigration and Citizenship Mr. Jason Kenney. It was a good meeting. Among the issues discussed, I impressed upon him the need for his government to come back to the table and negotiate a new agreement with Ontario. I've also asked the federal government to reverse these unilateral cuts.

I urge the federal government to put politics aside and sit down with Ontario to negotiate a new agreement that puts the needs of newcomers front and centre, and I call on all members of this House to stand together in the best interests of Ontario and Ontario's newcomers.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, we have a power problem in Ontario in that we're selling our surplus power to Quebec and the United States for much less than it costs to produce, actually to the tune of \$420 million. At the same time we have a surplus of energy, we're forcing intermittent wind and solar power onto the grid at subsidy-inflated prices. This is driving up energy costs for Ontario families and businesses, who are already hurting.

Minister, will you please tell Ontario families why you're driving up the cost of their energy bills to produce renewable energy we simply don't need?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** You know, when we started in 2003, the energy system was a mess. There wasn't enough generation, transmission was old and it was based on dirty coal. We made a decision: We're going to get out of coal, clean up the air, improve the health of Ontarians and make sure we have reliable power. That's been a long-term—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We had gotten so close. Let's just stay like this for the last minute, please.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** That's a long-term effort that requires decisions made three, five, 10 years in order to get the power you need on a specific day. We're making great progress in cleaning up the air. We are rebuilding our transmission and generation systems, and we are actually making money every year so far on the in-and-out exports because they do contribute to the bottom line of the ratepayers of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** First the government piles up the costs from the cancelled Oakville plant, then the costs from the now cancelled Mississauga power plant, and now we have \$420 million lost in surplus power sales to Quebec and the United States. Added up, we could very well have another billion-dollar boondoggle here.

We're paying above-market prices for renewable energy that the grid doesn't need and then selling it else-

where when it's not needed at below cost. This is sheer madness.

Minister, will you admit the green energy program has failed and pull back from the FIT subsidies which have led to job-killing energy prices?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** A little context: The two years previous to when we started in 2003, they paid almost a billion dollars to import power, and we're making money from the exports. It's a long-term approach.

But you know, cleaning up the air in the province of Ontario is important. It costs money for dirty air. It can cost \$4 billion every year for dirty air from coal production, which they did. We save not only the money for hospitals, but we improve the lives of Ontarians, we protect the lives of Ontarians. We lessen the human suffering from dirty air.

The choice is clear: They're for coal, we're for clean. We chose clean on behalf of the people of Ontario and we stand by that decision.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce two members in our gallery, Herb Wagner and Murray Pollard, who are both male breast cancer survivors. They're here today for the presentation of a petition that has been signed by hundreds of people calling for the third week of October to be designated as Male Breast Cancer Awareness Week.

They've already succeeded in having this week established in the state of Florida and are hoping that Ontario will establish this week to increase education and awareness of this disease and save lives.

Mr. Speaker, I hope to present the petition at the end of routine proceedings to declare that week as Male Breast Cancer Awareness Week in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'll do my best. Further introductions?

It is now time for members' statements.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### CARLETON PLACE AND DISTRICT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, for the past eight years, Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital has been appealing to the Ministry of Health for redevelopment funding and approval. The population growth in Carleton Place in this time has been significant, and demands for services and beds have increased well beyond the hospital's ability to serve under its current conditions.



Unfortunately, the Carleton Place hospital board has had to weave its way through the bureaucratic health care maze this government has created. The hospital board has had to deal with countless arms of the Ministry of Health, yet neither the Champlain LHIN nor the capital funding branch will commit to the board that the redevelopment will move forward. Ministry of Health staff have presented a proposal to cabinet with a recommendation to move forward, yet this government has stalled and is not proceeding.

This government has demonstrated that hospital proposals and promises are nothing more than a political football that can be punted about at a whim in an attempt to score political gain. It is disappointing, because the people of my riding expect that a redeveloped hospital in Carleton Place is essential to their health care. They believe that political and electoral gain ought not to be the determining factors for hospital funding.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, families in Ontario are facing a crisis in child care. As many may be aware, here in the city of Toronto a number of wards are facing losses of 25% to 50% of their regulated child care spaces. When I talk to people from northern Ontario and rural Ontario, they face even more dire situations.

All-day kindergarten is a useful thing, but the current process of implementation is not working. It's not addressing the transition costs. The Liberal government is not helping families who need child care through the summer. The tragic outcome of this poor implementation is that we may see large-scale closure of child care centres for younger children across this province.

Dalton McGuinty needs to stand up now and assure the parents of this province that he will not see closure of child care centres; that he will make sure that families and children are protected.

### HEALING CYCLE FOUNDATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, the Healing Cycle Foundation is a volunteer-based, registered charity that honours the end-of-life journey taken by those living with a life-threatening illness. Volunteers do this by raising funds to support hospice palliative care programs for individuals at the end of life and to compassionately deal with their loved ones.

On Sunday, June 24, 2012, the Healing Cycle Foundation hosts its annual 10-, 25-, 50-, 100- and 160-kilometre bicycle ride in Streetsville. All ride donations directly support hospice palliative care in Ontario.

In 2011, the foundation achieved its fundraising goal of \$1 million for the palliative care unit at Credit Valley Hospital. Contributions helped build the new 10,000 square-foot, 15-bed centre at Credit Valley Hospital.

This new palliative care facility at Credit Valley Hospital has been named after the Healing Cycle Foundation. It will house a comprehensive family-centred program to

meet the needs of patients and their families when an illness does not respond to treatment.

Thank you to the residents and the businesses in Mississauga who contribute to the Healing Cycle Foundation. I encourage everyone to volunteer, donate or register to ride in the 2012 event at [thehealingcycle.ca](http://thehealingcycle.ca).

### LESLIE FROST

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** On Friday, November 25, I had the honour to both attend and participate in a ceremony commemorating the gravesite of the Honourable Leslie Frost in Lindsay.

Leslie Frost, known in his day as "Old Man Ontario" and the "Laird of Lindsay," was first elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1937. He served the province as Treasurer, Minister of Mines and, of course, 12 years as Premier, from 1949 until 1961.

Leslie Frost championed small-town values in a time of large economic growth for this province. During his tenure, he led Ontario's post-war economic development, helped complete the St. Lawrence Seaway, and oversaw unprecedented expansion of Ontario's school system, highways and hospitals.

The Frost government introduced public hospital insurance to the province, which would be expanded by his successors to become the OHIP system of today.

The government of Leslie Frost was the first to pass laws providing penalties for racial, ethnic and gender discrimination. These laws, introduced in the early 1950s as the Fair Employment Practices Act and Fair Accommodation Practices Act, started a movement in Ontario politics that produced the Ontario Human Rights Code in 1962.

Many of his contemporaries still live in Lindsay and recall fondly the things he said and did in the barbershop and local restaurants.

I am particularly honoured to represent the same part of the province and many of the same constituents that this great MPP and visionary Premier did so many years ago.

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

#### NORMES D'EMPLOI

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, there is a growing problem across Ontario. It was one of the major concerns in my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton. I heard story after story from constituents who are experiencing this very same problem. The problem is precarious employment.

One of my constituents, Bhavan Kaur, told me her story, where she has been working at the same company at the same position for over two years and in those two years she has never transitioned to a full-time job. The company pays \$20 per hour, but after the temporary agency takes their portion she's left with \$10 per hour, with no benefits, no security—not a fair wage.

Something must be done to protect Ontario families.

Nous devons faire quelque chose pour aider les familles ontariennes.

### HUMBER RIVER REGIONAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Just a few years ago, a commitment was made to build a new hospital in the northwest area of Toronto serving the residents of York West as well. Thanks to the commitment, the vision and the perseverance of the CEO of the Humber River Regional Hospital, Mr. Ruben Devlin, and of the hospital board and staff, the dream is now a reality.

Last Friday, December 2, joined by my colleagues MPP Monte Kwinter and MPP Laura Albanese, hospital board members and staff, the groundbreaking took place.

The new Humber River Regional Hospital will be the first fully digital hospital in North America. I am proud to say, Speaker, that this will raise the benchmarks in reliability, access to instant information and seamless communication.

The new hospital will be a leader in technological advancements, setting the standards of excellence in environmental sustainability, healthy indoor environments, efficient use of natural resources, and energy conservation.

I am proud to say that this new hospital is one of 18 hospitals being built by our government in the last few years.

1310

With the new Humber River Regional Hospital on its way, our people, our community and generations to come will enjoy excellent in-hospital care delivered by the best-qualified medical professionals, aided by the latest and most innovative technologies. I look forward to the official opening in 2015, as it will usher in a new era of hospital care in York West for all our residents.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I rise today to remind the McGuinty government that for six weeks now residents of York region have been held hostage by the ongoing transit strike. It is clear that negotiations are not going to resolve this strike. York region residents are losing jobs and are forced to spend extra money on cab fare to keep the jobs that they have, and students can't get to school. Yet the McGuinty government has done absolutely nothing. It has in fact turned its back on the residents of Thornhill and York region.

They have voted against my bill to end the strike and they refuse to give York region the same rights and protections against transit disruptions that they have granted the city of Toronto. Once again, they are trying to shift the blame, this time by hiding behind the regional government, though the regional government made it clear that they won't end the strike. This blame game is making victims out of York region commuters. Just the other day I received a message from a constituent: "The service connects with TTC, GO and other transit services

so it has impact on many workers, students and businesses throughout the GTA." So the question is, how long will the McGuinty government be willing to keep this strike going?

Today, once again, I have the following message to deliver from my constituents in Thornhill and the residents of York region to the Premier and the Minister of Labour: Take your responsibility to the people of this province seriously. End the York region transit strike today. Give York region the same rights and protections you gave the city of Toronto and make York region transit an essential service.

### LES HORNE

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's with sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to Les Horne. He was a passionate defender of children's rights and the first provincial child advocate for Ontario.

Les passed away over the summer in Oakville, but he left behind an incredible legacy. Les Horne truly believed that children, especially those who are most vulnerable, deserve to be heard, and he dedicated his life to helping raise their voices. His greatest volunteer achievement is often considered to be his dedicated work with Defence for Children International, which is committed to promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I was privileged to serve on the board of the Halton Children's Aid Society with Les. I found out he was also a very strong advocate for community supports rather than for institutional care. He led a group that recommended the closure of Ontario's large institutions in favour of smaller, community-based homes.

Les's activities on behalf of children are simply too long to list here—proof of his willingness to act whenever somebody needed a hand.

I'd like to extend my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Les Horne. He was a very proud native of my own birthplace of Liverpool, England, and a true children's champion for Ontario.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** People in York region are still waiting for someone to help them by ending the York region transit strike. This strike is hurting people trying to get to their jobs, to school or to their doctor, or just to buy groceries.

One constituent has to take time off work to drive her daughter to school, and there are many who tell us the same story. Another, Deb, has to pay \$75 for gas every week, as she cannot take the bus. Guy cannot take his son to the mall—or anywhere else, for that matter. Bev wonders what the effects of the strike are on retailers in York region—which is, I think, a good question. George asks what the continuing strike means for the environment, global warming and the green approach to the environment. These are real people who are hurting because of the strike. Social agencies tell me that this



strike is devastating for the most vulnerable people. These are people who don't have a car. They can't afford a taxi, and they are dependent on the support they receive through York region's agencies. They are, in effect, being denied the support they need.

People in York region want it to end and they need it to end. Only the Ontario government can bring this strike to an end, and we need you to step up and take action.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the members for their statements.

#### ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2011 annual report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And we're reading it, Speaker—in French, to boot.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I hope so.

#### PETITIONS

##### MALE BREAST CANCER

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas, each year, an estimated 45 men will die of male breast cancer in Canada, a number that is expected only to increase; and

"Whereas breast cancer is widely believed to be a disease specific to women, and due to a general lack of awareness that men can also develop breast cancer, men are typically diagnosed at a late stage; and

"Whereas promoting awareness and education about male breast cancer is critical to improving the health and well-being of men throughout Ontario, facilitating earlier detection, improving the prognosis of men who have been diagnosed with the disease and ultimately preventing further loss of life; and

"Whereas, in remembrance of the many men who have lost their lives or are fighting for their lives,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the third week of October be designated as Male Breast Cancer Awareness Week in Ontario."

I affix my signature, Mr. Speaker, as I wholeheartedly agree with this. I thank the participants for bringing this forward to the attention of all of the Legislature.

##### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Michael Harris:** On behalf of the many parents with children enrolled in daycare programs in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, I am pleased to read the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Waterloo Region District School Board (hereinafter 'the board') proposes to implement a before-

and-after-school child care program in their schools for children ages four to seven years, effective September 2012;

"Whereas the board intends to prohibit all daycare centres currently partnered with schools from continuing to provide the same services;

"Whereas the board intends to charge \$27 per day for the same services that the YWCA charges \$16 per day;

"Whereas the implementation of such a program would result in the loss of revenue for the daycare centres currently partnered with schools, further resulting in either a fee increase to child care services for children three years and under (\$1,500 plus per month) or the complete closure of child care programs for children three years and under;

"Whereas the result would be create a crisis in child care for parents in this region who require good-quality, affordable child care for their children three and under, which already suffers from a severe shortage of such services...."

I will affix my name to this petition and give it to Danica to take to the table.

##### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients" under certain conditions; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are being performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital," now called Health Sciences North, "thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask page Yousef to bring it to the Clerk.

##### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;  
1320

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I will affix my name to this and give it to Sebastian, our great page, to take to the Clerk.

### WIND TURBINES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further petitions? The member from Bruce-Grey. Sorry, I mean—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Simcoe-Grey.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Simcoe-Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very kind of you.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

### CHILD CARE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further petitions? The member from—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Parkdale-High Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Parkdale-High Park. I was just looking at another member. Carry on, member.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it says:

"Whereas the government of Ontario is not providing their fair share of funding for child care subsidies with enough capital transitional funding for child care centres experiencing financial problems due to full-day learning;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To fund their actual 80% share of child care subsidies and provide adequate transitional funding due to full-day learning."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign it and give it to page Tara to be delivered.

### SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a new policy from the Electrical Safety Authority that mandates that all electrical contractors must have at least one licensed master electrician on their staff for every business effective December 31, 2011, is forcing small contracting businesses in Ontario out of business;

"Whereas this ESA policy severely impacts small electrical contracting businesses in Ontario. George, in my riding in Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, who has been in the electrical trade for the past 51 years and a small business owner for the past 36 years, who has good standing with the Electrical Safety Authority, Ontario Hydro and local utilities, who follows the same rules and regulations as the ESA, follows the same electrical codes, adheres to the same inspections and pays the same fees as large companies, will not be allowed to renew his electrical contractor licence. Effective December 31, 2011, George will no longer be licensed to practise in Ontario" and "will be forced to close his small business."

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Consumer Services to direct the Electrical Safety Authority of Ontario to modify the licensing requirements to allow small electrical contractors and self-employed electricians to work in the residential and rural market without the necessary burden of obtaining a master electrician licence or, at the very minimum, grandfather those who are currently qualified and entitled to work in Ontario."

I agree with this petition and will be signing it.

### HYDRO DAM

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition with regard to the Bala Falls. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government permitted the release of crown lands to enable the development of a



hydro dam in the heart of Bala without discussion or proper consultation with the municipality of the township of Muskoka Lakes, the district of Muskoka or the residents and businesses who would be directly affected; and

“Whereas the community is a tourism destination which is dependent on Bala Falls as an attraction; and

“Whereas residents and business people alike are deeply concerned about the economic and environmental impact that the construction and operation of the dam will have on the community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty government and in particular the Minister of Natural Resources reverse the decision to release crown lands for a hydro dam in Bala Falls.”

I support this petition and affix my signature to it.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built over 200 feet (60 metres) below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source for over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA’s potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry.”

Mr. Speaker, I will sign that petition. Thank you.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit/ Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre

en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to rise this afternoon and to speak in support of Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act. As we outlined in the speech from the throne, as we work on moving Ontario forward, as we look at dealing with the challenges that we face, we will be giving priority to programs that both address the needs of Ontario families and strengthen the economy, and the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit is an example of just such a program. It will help both families and the economy.

In particular, if the proposed Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, is passed, it will do a number of things. Firstly, it will help seniors stay in their homes longer. Secondly, if family members actually have seniors living with them, it will help those family members who have a senior living with them. It helps the taxpayers, because staying at home always costs less than long-term care, so it's good for the taxpaying public. We believe that it will support about \$800 million in home renovation activity and support about 10,500 jobs per year, so it's clearly good to help stimulate the economy as well.

So, how does this work? Well, if the legislation is passed, and I certainly hope that the members opposite will be supporting Bill 2, effective October 1, 2011—so, in fact, the date for the bill will be retroactive to October 1, 2011—senior homeowners, senior tenants, people who share a home with a senior relative, any of those, would be allowed to claim a refundable tax credit up to \$1,500 a year for expenses related to permanent modifications to the home.

Now, when we began to debate this the other day, Speaker, I noticed that some of the comments from the official opposition were about, “Oh, well, you shouldn't allow people who are tenants to access this sort of a thing because it wouldn't be a good business deal”—that is, to upgrade a leased space as opposed to an owned space. I really thought that that indicated a certain lack of being in touch with reality, quite frankly, as to the circumstances in which lots of our seniors live, because if we think about different ridings around Ontario—and I understand that it varies dramatically from riding to riding, but if you look at the general mix of where people live in Ontario, there are lots of people who never in their life own their own home. Home is a leased space. We need to recognize that. Furthermore, there are lots of seniors who may once have owned their own home but who have chosen to sell their home as they find themselves becoming empty nesters—they don't need a big home—and have decided to move into leased space, a smaller apartment or maybe a small townhouse or something, because they choose to do that at that stage of their life.

1330

So to say, “No, no, why would you have this apply to people who lease a space,” seems to me to be a very odd



comment. I can think of all sorts of examples where, with the support of being able to have an accessible leased space that meets the mobility needs of the senior, it in fact might be a very good quality-of-life investment for a senior to upgrade a leased space.

I can think of a senior who maybe has a pet. They're living alone; they have a pet. There might be another accessible apartment to rent, but the accessible apartment might not allow pets. It's much better to upgrade the leased space you've already got to allow you to keep that pet, because in lots of cases, if there's a senior living alone, that pet is an important companion. That would be a case where you might want to upgrade a leased space for quality of life.

What about a case where maybe there's a senior couple in a townhouse? Yes, there might be someplace they could rent that's accessible, but one member of the couple needs the accessibility modifications; another member of the couple might still be mobile and actually enjoy the freedom that a townhouse gives to get out into the garden and do a little bit of gardening on the patio. That might be very important to that particular couple—so again, an instance. Maybe somebody has been living in the same apartment for years. It is home. Maybe it's got a great view; they love watching the sunset. There are all kinds of reasons why people would choose to upgrade a leased space.

So I do not think that it behooves us, as members of the Legislature, to try to tell people that if you're going to upgrade the space you live in, you have to own it. We're, in fact, trying to provide the flexibility for the senior that this tax credit would be available regardless of whether the space the senior lives in is owned by the senior or perhaps they live with a family member, so it's owned by the family member, or it may, in fact, be a leased space. So that would be the strategy we are looking at.

Now, what we know, and the reason underlying this from a quality-of-life point of view, is that we know that in lots of cases seniors prefer to stay in their own home. In fact, most seniors prefer to stay in their own home as long as possible. One of the impediments to that is often that the home just doesn't meet the mobility needs and accessibility needs that the senior has. However, if you can make the home that the senior wants to stay in—it's their familiar space—accessible, then, along with some of the other community supports, it's a great opportunity for the senior to live at home.

I think of some of the supports that are available in my riding of Guelph: Meals on Wheels, where you can get a hot meal each day delivered to your door. That's a service that is available in lots of communities around Ontario that helps support the other needs of people staying in their own home. I've got another service that is really interesting, which I think is relatively unique to Guelph: Some of the Aging at Home money in Guelph—one of the recipients of that is actually the Guelph family health team, and in Guelph the vast majority of family doctors belong to the Guelph family health team. Their Aging at Home program actually is providing one of their

registered nurses to go out and to do calls to seniors in their homes. This would be for things like: The nurse goes into the home and checks on the meds. Maybe there are new meds or maybe the family is concerned that the person isn't managing the meds properly, so the nurse would go into the home, look at how the meds are organized and see if there's some way that it can be organized better to make sure that the senior actually gets the right meds at the right time. Maybe it's as simple as: They stored them in the upstairs bathroom but they really should be on the kitchen table so that they access them at mealtime when they need them. But they have a look at: How do we make sure you get the right meds?

Often it will be somebody who has had some sort of an acute health episode and is now being released home. There's concern about how the person will be able to manage at home, so the nurse from the family health team may do a few check-ins just to make sure that that person is coping okay once they're released from hospital.

You might have somebody who is in the early stages of dementia, and they can still manage at home, but having the nurse go in periodically to evaluate how the senior is coping in their own setting is very helpful in terms of the doctor knowing at what point the person is coping okay or if they need extra support from the health system.

But when we put those things together, the supports that are available in the community and the physical renovation of the home to make the physical situation suitable, many more people can stay in their own homes, and that is a very good thing.

Okay, so how would this work? If the legislation is passed, in order to claim the tax credit, the senior or the family members, whoever is going to be responsible, would obviously have to get the receipts from the suppliers, the receipts from the contractors, and you would submit those when you do your personal income tax.

Here is the total eligible cost for the year—and this is something that would be available each year you do your income tax. What I'm describing is for one year, but it would be available next year and next year and the year after that, if that's necessary for that particular senior. But each year, you could submit up to \$10,000 in eligible expenses, and the credit would be 15%, or \$1,500, that would be refunded to the senior. Because it's a refundable tax credit, even if the senior doesn't actually owe \$1,500 in taxes, they would still get the benefit. That is, you could get that, part of that or all of it, for that matter, as a cheque, because it's a refundable tax credit.

So what are the sorts of things that would be possible? The obvious ones are things like the ramp, so you can get in and out of the front door. I know as I was going door to door, I was finding more and more homes in Guelph where somebody has built a ramp so that one or another member of the family can get in and out the door in a wheelchair or maybe with a walker. But often, depending on the layout of the property, those ramps can be quite extensive and quite expensive, so getting some assistance



with building that ramp can be really problematic. In this case, getting some help would be very, very helpful.

Another big-ticket item that has gotten a lot of attention is seniors who live in two-storey houses being able to install chairlifts so that they can get up to the bedroom floor. Again, that's a very important and often very costly renovation.

Another instance would be creating some sort of walk-in bathtub or walk-in shower—so replacing the tub, which often becomes quite hazardous for people to have to try to step in and out of, and getting up and down is problematic. So being able to replace the conventional tub with some sort of walk-in tub or shower would be something that would be permitted.

1340

So those are sort of big-ticket items, but there's a lot of smaller things. They all add to the accessibility and the safety of the home, and they add up if you have to do several of them: things like the grab bars that you see in an accessible washroom, getting those grab bars installed in your washrooms at home, or handrails along corridors so that you don't have to have the walker to get from room to room; you can just use the railing along the hall.

We talked about ramps and things.

Widening door passages: If somebody is in a chair, doors in homes, and particularly doors in bathrooms, are often narrower than a wheelchair requires. So you could widen the door, either just replacing—cutting a hole. Sometimes you can simply re-hinge the door so you've got the swing-away hinges. So you might simply be able to re-hinge doors.

Often, if somebody's now in a wheelchair, you might want to lower the counters in the kitchen and in the bathroom. And often if you've got a senior, they have trouble bending, and in particular bending and looking in under something. So the renovation might be to install pullout drawers so that you can pull things out and not have to be crawling under the cupboard to try and see if you can find the can of soup that you're looking for or the pot you're looking for at the back of the cupboard. Those pullout drawers can make a tremendous difference to the person that's there.

Sometimes, if you've got somebody who's in a wheelchair, you need to just change the cupboards so there aren't any cupboards under the sink, so that the wheelchair will just slide in under a counter and you can get up close.

And then there are all kinds of issues where as hands get arthritic, or if you're like me and you're getting BlackBerry thumb, you have faucets that have levers rather than twisting, and it may be necessary to change door handles and door locks to those that are easier to handle for arthritic hands.

In some cases it might be reconfiguring the house so that there's a bedroom on the first floor; it might be creating a granny flat.

There are all sorts of things that would be permissible. It's not just the two or three sort of big-ticket items that have caught a lot of attention. It would be all that myriad

of things that make it possible for seniors to live in their own homes.

We do understand that we're living in a recessionary time. We do understand that we have to look at expenses, and when you give a tax credit, there is a bill associated with that. We think in the 2011-12 year, if we get the same sort of take-up that the federal government got on their home reno tax credit—which was a more general one; it wasn't just senior-focused—we think it could cost up to \$60 million because we've made it retroactive back to October. It could be up to \$60 million. And I want to assure you, Speaker, and anyone else who is looking that in fact we have found cost savings in other files to offset that \$60 million that would be required to provide this tax credit this year.

So I think this is an excellent program and I certainly hope that we will have the support of all members in this House in this program, which will make it much easier for seniors to stay in their homes.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Mr. Speaker, throughout the recent election period, the people of my riding told me time and time again that the cost of staying in their own homes was getting unaffordable, but it was the seniors who, without doubt, were the loudest voice in asking us to do something to help them out. They weren't talking about special renovations. They were talking about the basic expenses that everyone else was talking about—home heating, hydro costs, property taxes—but from the perspective of someone who was on a fixed income. But what help does this government offer? They tell them that they must cut costs by taking their showers and doing their laundry in the middle of the night—some answer for someone who has contributed so much to this country. They have seen this Liberal government raise the cost of living in their home to a point where they cannot cover the basic costs and they are forced to decide whether they should buy food or heat their homes. These people don't have \$10,000 to spend to access this grant.

It is time to listen to what the people are telling us. It is time to pay attention, and it is time to take action. Mr. Speaker, it's time for this Liberal government to join forces with the rest of the House and get its spending in order and help out the working families and the seniors and give them some real help. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It was a clear message that I received when I was knocking on the doors during the campaign, from many, many doors, from many, many seniors that I met: They need help. They need help with their day-to-day activities. They need help with the issues that face them. They need help with purchasing a full prescription instead of buying half a prescription. They need help getting to their doctor's appointments by travelling to those appointments by roads; they can't



afford the gas to get to those appointments. They need help in their homes. They need help, period.

This piece of legislation, although it's going to assist with certain passages as far as widening doors, ramps, lowering counters and jobs—it's all good; it is good, and it is more than likely going to be something that I feel comfortable in being able to support. However, at the end of the day, it's going to be for the limited individuals who will benefit from this, and the vast majority of our seniors will not get any benefit out of this program because they can't afford it. It is not there. They are challenged with the regular costs on a monthly basis of making ends meet, and they just don't have those funds in order to invest in this. That's the reality that we're facing.

Right now what they're asking for is, "Give me a break now. Give me a break in my home so I can have that additional \$20, \$30, \$40 that I can have every month." There's an idea there. Embrace that idea and give that opportunity to Ontarians to choose how they want to spend their monies in their own ways. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I was delighted to hear the comments from my colleague from Guelph.

You know, I've got a bit of a connection to Guelph. My late mother grew up on a farm just outside of Guelph called Rockwood, Ontario—a beautiful community. And then after my mother's parents left the farm, they moved into Guelph and they settled on Nottingham Street in Guelph, Ontario. It's just a stone's throw away from the Church of Our Lady, which is one of the most beautiful Catholic churches in the province of Ontario. The architecture is supreme. And I remember when I was a little guy visiting my grandmother—I used to spend the month of August there—I really noticed a number of seniors who were in Guelph there, particularly around Nottingham Street. They were going to a number of seniors' services sponsored by the Church of Our Lady. I must say, when you look at the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, as articulated extremely well by the member from Guelph, I have this vision in my mind of those seniors today who are on Nottingham Street—close to Gordon Street there in Guelph, Ontario—and I can see them taking the opportunity to take advantage of this, and not only the seniors themselves but the families of seniors.

You know, that aspect of this bill has been lost during the debate, where, for example, Mr. Speaker, if you had your aging parents and they're living with you and your lovely wife in Fergus, Ontario, and you decided that you want to retrofit your shower and your tub or add a stairlift to your beautiful home in Fergus, Ontario, you would be able to take advantage of the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, and that's what the member for Guelph was clearly talking about.

I know she's in constant contact with the seniors in her community. I know she visits every seniors' club in the

riding of Guelph on a continuous basis. I know they have activities at the University of Guelph, and she's there. She's listening to them very, very carefully, and she knows that those seniors in Guelph are going to take advantage of this program and go to Home Hardware and create some economic activity in Guelph.

1350

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I take great pleasure in having the opportunity to stand and respond to the seniors' home renovation tax credit. I too have heard from a number of seniors, and still am, since the election—prior to, during, and since. The seniors that we have heard from in my office have indicated to a person that there are very few people who would be in a position to take advantage of this home tax credit because of the escalation of the minimum \$10,000 to take advantage of the maximum.

The people we heard from said that they would like to see the HST removed from heating, electricity and energy. That would have a far bigger impact. That would affect all seniors, at whatever income level, especially the lower-income seniors who, because of the HST on their energy bills, take the bigger hit on their bills. It would sure make a big difference to them.

I know that seniors—my late mother, if she would have been in her home, would have been in a position that maybe she would have been able to take advantage of this, but she's no longer with us, so she can't. But there are a number other seniors throughout the province, and throughout my riding especially, who would, I think, benefit far more if we were able to remove the HST off the energy price and do them some justice there, where they could actually take advantage on a day-to-day basis on other bills that they pay, whether it's gasoline they buy at the pumps or the HST that they pay on energy for electricity, hydro, home heating etc. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I want to thank the four members who have offered questions and comments on the member for Guelph's presentation. We now will return to member for Guelph, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to the members from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, Algoma-Manitoulin, Peterborough and Sarnia-Lambton.

I didn't realize that your grandparents were in Rockwood. Of course, the Speaker is very interested in the fact that they came from Rockwood, because that's a town that has passed back and forth between the Speaker and I as to which one of us actually represents it. But I'm very pleased that they landed in Guelph.

Nottingham Street is a lovely part of the old part of town, but very typical of the houses that would require some sort of renovation to make them more accessible: stairs everywhere, with narrow doors sometimes to the back of the house. So those would be exactly the sorts of homes we would want to pick up.



I do have to comment on the comment that the member from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry made about having showers in the middle of the night. Let's get our facts straight here: The off-peak time goes from 7 p.m. in the evening to 7 a.m. in the morning. If you have your shower at 7:05—not the middle of the night; 7:05—it's going to be cheaper, or if you're doing your laundry. And it's all day—24 hours—on Saturday and Sunday that it's off-peak. So no senior in this province needs to have their shower in their newly installed shower in the middle of the night. It just isn't required.

The other thing that I think we need to keep an eye on is that there are a lot of other tax credits specifically targeted at seniors. The healthy home tax credit is but one thing targeted at seniors, and I sincerely hope all members will support Bill 2.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to speak this afternoon to Bill 2, which is named by the government the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011. Based on the name, it sounds like a great bill, of course; the government is very good at naming things so they sound pretty good. But I'm afraid this bill is more about politics than it really is about making a big difference for the vast number of seniors across our province.

I think our critic, the member from Thornhill, who just came into the Legislature—I'm sure he's been busy with the Auditor General's report today—did a fine job in his response of pointing out how this bill—you know, it sounds great, but it really affects a pretty tiny number of seniors across the province that really do need some form of help. He pointed out that the median income for seniors in Ontario—that's the largest number of seniors falling into an income category—if you're single, is \$25,000, and if you're a couple, it's \$45,000. The way this tax credit works is, you have to spend \$10,000 to get the benefit of a \$1,500 tax credit. You can spend it on, I believe, things that will help the accessibility of your home but not improve the value of your home. So it's fairly tightly defined.

I think on this side of the House we want to see seniors have money left over to be able to stay in their homes as long as possible and make their homes as comfortable as possible. The problem with this is that the people that need it aren't going to have the \$10,000. Certainly, with that median income of \$25,000 for a single, they're not going to be able to spend half of their gross income on renovations to their house, and which specifically won't increase the value of the house as well. And those people that can afford it—and, I might point out, our critic noted that he turned 65 this year, or turns 65 this year—

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Don't make me older than I am.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** —is soon to turn, sometime in the next year—and he would qualify for it. But he also pointed out that if he was going to spend the \$10,000 to

make the renovation to his house, he would do it. He doesn't need this tax credit to be able to benefit.

So I think the problem is that it's going to benefit those that don't necessarily need it, and those that really need it won't be able to afford to do the work because they won't have the money, or the ability to even borrow the money. So certainly it's more about the name of the bill sounding like the government's doing something profound, when really it's not doing that much. It's affecting a very, very tiny percentage of the seniors and not benefiting those who truly need it. I note that if you're receiving some sort of assistance like ODSP, then you also are not allowed to benefit from this tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's safe to say that what we heard, and what I hear in my riding all the time, is that people—if you're going to do something that would benefit everyone, the most logical thing, certainly, and it was part of our election platform, would be to remove the HST from heating costs and from electricity costs. I think the NDP had proposed and had a private member's bill put forward to just remove the HST from heating costs. The PCs, in their election platform, had proposed to remove the HST not only from heating but from electricity as well.

This is something that not just seniors, but all those folks out there, especially in the lower-income levels who are struggling to pay their hydro bills, really want. I've got solid information from going door to door and also from people that have written to me, making it very clear that that's the thing they'd really like.

As an example, here's a letter from Sharon Watson in Sundridge:

"I am writing this letter in hopes that you can stop Hydro One from putting this new charge onto the"—it's about other additional charges, and we know how much hydro bills have gone up. "I am writing this letter in hopes that you can stop Hydro One from putting this new charge onto the already high hydro bill that the public is now receiving. This is nothing but blatant thievery. The 'smart meter' was not asked for by the public and we are already trying to adjust to the cheaper hours so as not to add to the hydro bill. Most seniors have been practising the 'green method' that was taught by their parents and grandparents before them by hanging out the clothes as way back when there were no such things as dryers; now, to add insult to injury, we must sometimes do laundry on a Sunday to benefit these cheaper hours due to inclement weather. Sunday was always supposed to be a day of rest (God's day); now that too has been changed.

"Hydro One has implemented this new meter so they alone must assume the cost of this new method to charge its clients, not ask the hard-working taxpayers to pay for a service not asked for or wanted.

1400

"My husband and I bought our house seven years ago. At that time we were paying approximately \$50 during the summer months and around \$120 in the winter months; now, it's anywhere from \$119 in the summer" months—more than double—"and upwards from \$150 to



\$180 in the winter months. The delivery charge is as much or more than the actual hydro used, not counting the regulatory charge, the debt retirement charge and then the HST. I would like to put this into perspective for you; we now are seniors and our house is 974 square feet. I am working two jobs just to keep afloat, and another charge is being added to the hydro bill that I can barely afford to pay now.

"Seniors are being asked to pay and pay but their income doesn't increase with their daily living expenses. Something needs to be done to bring this money-grabbing company to its senses.

"You may use this letter as an example in the Legislature."

It's signed by Sharon Watson from Sundridge, Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, that's a living, breathing person, who's a senior, who's working a job and is making it very clear that what they'd like to see is some sort of relief on their hydro bill. That is something that would affect all seniors, whereas this bill we're talking about today, Bill 2, affects just a tiny percentage of seniors, seniors who have the \$10,000 to be able to spend on a renovation to increase accessibility, and those who don't have the money aren't able to benefit. They aren't able to get the \$1,500 tax credit.

That's the kind of thing that I'm hearing. As noted from that senior, in that letter from Sharon Watson, she points out that she's working as well. I think what this Parliament should be focusing on is creating good jobs as well. There are lots of seniors, some because they want to and some out of necessity, continuing to work beyond age 65, as this senior pointed out she is doing. We need to be able to create good private sector jobs, not only for these seniors but for their kids, and their kids who may be playing a role in supporting the seniors in their later years. So we need to create those jobs.

That's part of the reason that in this minority Parliament one of the focuses of the opposition has been to create good private sector jobs. I'm now the Northern Development and Mines critic, and last week I had an opportunity to ask a question about a company called Global Sticks, based in Oliver Paipoonge township near Thunder Bay. This is a company that received \$7 million from the government of Ontario. In fact, the McGuinty government did a big press release just in May of this year announcing they were creating 130 jobs, and yet, now we heard last week that the employees haven't been paid and the company has, in fact, shut down. On the one hand, the government gave them money to create jobs, but on the other hand, we hear that it was death by 1,000 cuts, that it took two years to get the boiler's certificate of approval from the Ministry of the Environment, that they didn't have a wood supply despite just about every sawmill in the Thunder Bay except for one is shut down. There was no supply of fibre, as it's called, and they had to initially get wood from Minnesota. As a result, these jobs that the government just spent a lot of money to try to create are now threatened, and those are the sorts of

jobs seniors need and their kids need as well to be able to have enough money to retire and live with dignity.

That's been a real priority of the opposition, to do things that will create jobs. In my own riding, just last week was a bad week in that it was announced that the Tembec flooring plant in Huntsville is going to be closing. We're going to be losing eight jobs in Huntsville from that Tembec flooring plant closing. Also, Grandview Resort in Huntsville, a long-established resort, is going to be closing some time this year. That's at least another 80 jobs, and probably more, at Grandview. So just in one day last week in my riding, 160 good jobs were lost. That's why we recognize that we have to do something in this province to get some private sector jobs created. Unfortunately, this bill, Bill 2, sounds good, but it's not really addressing that problem. So that's one of the focuses that the opposition has taken.

I've got some other letters that point out that people are struggling with their hydro bill, and I note that the Auditor General just came out with his report today. In that Auditor General's report, he delivered a scathing indictment of Dalton McGuinty's expensive energy experiments. The auditor revealed that the McGuinty government's policies are driving up hydro bills. Well, the letter I just read makes that quite clear, that the green jobs claim from the Liberals is greatly inflated and that the Liberals never bothered to do any cost-benefit analysis of the big flagship \$7-billion Samsung deal. This is driving up energy costs for seniors.

It also pointed out, on the all-important job front, that they claimed through their Green Energy Act that there were going to be 50,000 jobs created. The Auditor General reports that many of these jobs are short-term jobs and that in fact they may be gone in just a few short years. The Auditor General estimates that 30,000 of these jobs are likely to be short-term construction jobs, lasting from one to three years.

The Auditor General also notes that studies in other jurisdictions have shown that for each job created through renewable energy, two to four jobs are often lost in other sectors as a result of higher electricity prices. So not only do we have seniors unable to pay their hydro bill and looking for some relief; actually, for each job you create, you lose a job.

As an example of that, Mr. Speaker, I'm now Northern Development and Mines critic. Really, one of the greatest opportunities for job creation in the north is the Ring of Fire. We hear the government speak about that a lot, but the Ring of Fire needs some help to be able to develop. Also, for the province to fully benefit from the resource, we need to process the ore here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the Ring of Fire is about 500 kilometres north of Thunder Bay; there, they have a huge chromite discovery and nickel discovery. Once it's eventually developed, they would concentrate the ore at the mine sites and then ship it, probably by slurry pipeline, to a road which needs to be built to Webequie, a First Nations community, by truck down to a railway, which then would go, ideally, to Timmins or Sudbury to be con-



centrated. The big question is, will that refining of the ore happen in Ontario at all, or will the train keep on going to Quebec, which has lower energy costs? Or, as has been asked in some questions in this Legislature as recently as today, will the ore just be shipped to China, where it would be refined there, and we'd lose out on those jobs?

The reason we'd lose out on the jobs is the point that a third of the cost of refining the chromite is energy. If our energy costs here in Ontario are completely out of whack with other jurisdictions—they're moving that way as a result of some of the policies of the government—then what happens is that we lose all those refining jobs and many, many other jobs in the province of Ontario.

As the opposition, we've been focusing on the priorities of jobs, but also we've been focusing, and we've been making, Mr. Speaker, some pretty constructive suggestions, on how to improve things. We've suggested that we need to have a change in the apprenticeship system in the province of Ontario. We need to modernize the apprentice system, create 200,000 skilled jobs positions and have it more integrated with community colleges. We had colleges here last week, and if you met with them, they pointed out that there's going to be a gap in the next few years. We need skilled workers, but we'll also have a higher unemployment rate and a greater demand for skilled workers. That can be solved by some of the measures we're proposing, by changing the apprenticeship ratio.

1410

We have this crazy system in Ontario where, as an example, if you're an electrician, if you're a small company, if you have one electrician you can have one apprentice; if you have two electricians you can have two apprentices; and—the member from Simcoe North can tell me if I get this wrong—if you have three electrician journeymen you can have three apprentices. To have four, you need six electricians. Talk about stopping a company from growing and stopping an opportunity for young people to get jobs.

To have five apprentices, you need nine journeymen, and if you lose one of those journeymen you've got to get rid of the apprentice. How ridiculous is that, especially when seven other provinces have a one-to-one ratio, which allows much more opportunity for young people to be able to get a job? So, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the government has misplaced priorities.

The other focus that we, as the opposition, have been saying that the government needs to deal with is the debt crisis here in the province of Ontario, the fact that they're on track to double the debt of the province; that revenues, as the critic pointed out, were actually record revenues: I believe it was \$108 billion last year. But government spending just tends to keep going up, especially in wages, which is the biggest part of the budget.

So we've been making a very reasonable suggestion, and that is to have a public sector wage freeze so that we can get our finances under control. I believe it was pointed out by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that the public sector is currently being paid

about 27% higher than the private sector for similar jobs. So if you want to maintain services, then you really do need to have this wage freeze to save the government about \$2 billion a year and get us back towards a balanced situation.

Right now, the government's spending \$2 million an hour more than it's bringing in in revenue, and that is just simply not sustainable over the long term, as has been pointed out on numerous occasions. You just can't keep on spending that way—well, you can keep on spending that way as long as someone's willing to lend you money, but when they have actually stopped lending you money, all of a sudden you have no more money to spend. That's the case we see in places like Greece at this time. We don't want to be going down that road.

Unfortunately, the trend right now is in the wrong direction. We had a \$14-billion deficit last year—in other words, we spent \$14 billion more than we brought in last year—and this year, it's going up to \$16 billion. The finance minister likes to spin that as somehow an improvement, but the real numbers are that the deficit's actually growing this year.

I'm just about out of time, Mr. Speaker. So in conclusion, this bill would affect a very small number of seniors. If we did something like what was proposed by the opposition, to bring in relief in the form of taking the HST off of electricity bills in particular, this would be broad-based relief for all seniors. I have many more letters and emails from seniors in my riding which I could have read into the record; I didn't. Some of them have very large lettering pointing out that they're not happy. It's very clear that that is something that would benefit all seniors across the province, whereas this bill, Bill 2, will benefit just a very few seniors.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** The government bill to address the need to assist seniors to remain in their homes, while admirable and with good intent, will not help seniors in my riding and across the province that are in need. It will not help those on the line between poverty and just doing okay. They won't be able to take advantage of the tax credit because they don't have \$10,000 to spend, and those who live in apartments—their landlords aren't going to spend \$10,000 to get a \$1,500 tax credit.

The wait list in Niagara for affordable housing is two to 2.75 years for seniors for a bachelor apartment or a one-bedroom. There are 2,000 seniors in Niagara waiting for affordable housing, 1,000 in my riding of Welland alone, and more than 100,000 seniors across the province of Ontario live in poverty.

What seniors need is supportive care, supportive services. They need help with a bath; they need help to get their groceries. They need help with snow shovelling, with a little housekeeping and perhaps with some laundry. That's what will keep them in their homes.

They may need a bus pass that's paid for, some foot care or a ride to a medical appointment, and that will keep them in their homes.



They may need some new windows, some new doors or some insulation in their attic, and that may keep them in their homes. Having the HST off their home heating bills might give them a little relief as well.

What they need is sustainable health care and home care, and they need well-paid caregivers whom they can rely on to show up. This is what will keep them in their homes.

So I urge the government to consider all the debate we've had over the last few days and make some amendments to their bill or to change their bill in some way that will assist those most in need in our senior community.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I was listening very carefully to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. I have to say respectfully that he always addresses the matter and the issues he sees affecting the people that he represents.

Sometimes we would go back and forth with the member from Etobicoke Centre about who has the largest number of seniors, renters, tenants and people in need of some assistance. Maybe this could be challenged by another member who has the largest number, but I have to say that I have a very large senior population in my area, and they are not too well off. They belong to a particular segment in our society that doesn't have the luxury of hundreds of thousands of dollars in RRSPs or savings. These are the people who usually live on maybe the lowest pension that they get from the federal government, and maybe—maybe—they have something from the employer. But this is the class that perhaps wouldn't have a private pension plan or one from the company they worked for.

I have to say that if my seniors would hear me as their representative saying, "Well, I am not going to support this bill, because it only helps a small group in my community," I think they would lynch me. I think they would really be offended.

What we do in this House, Speaker, and what the government is trying to do, is assist people in need. A lot of people in my area would take advantage, as long as there is some possibility, some opportunity that the government offers them to help themselves.

This is one way. I support it, and I hope that the government will support it as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I just want to compliment our member from Parry Sound and say that it goes further than a smaller segment.

We're all assuming that once you turn 65, you're going to need to renovate your house to stay there. I come from the health care system, and I'll tell you now that a lot of people do not need this tax benefit until they're in their mid- to late 70s and 80s. So there's an even smaller segment of society that will be going after this tax benefit. Look at our member from Thornhill—I don't want to pick on him today. He's 65 this year. He is

highly, highly not needing to have his house renovated any time soon.

I met a lady from my constituency last week, and she told me she had to borrow money in order to make ends meet; her pension was not enough. She was saying to me, "If you can do anything at all, help me lower my tax burden." I think that supporting the HST off our heating, which the members of the NDP are supporting, will give that lady and any other constituent, senior or not a senior, the tax relief they need that they can make ends meet day to day.

I would suggest—I don't want to just say it's a bad idea—that if you have \$64-million-plus to spend, because we don't even know how much this is going to cost at the end of the day—why not put it toward getting our deficit down? If you really, really want to spend the money—I know it's a problem—why not give more surgery times? Let's get the wait time down. Put it toward surgeons.

1420

Put it towards long-term-care beds; get the people out of the hospitals. Let's start spending the money wisely for everybody's benefit. Let's put more money into home care so that more nurses can see these patients. That's the key. It's not renovating the house to keep them in it; it's giving them the supports they need in their house to stay there.

As I said before, there's not enough of a spectrum of the population that is going to benefit from this tax credit, so I do not support this bill. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, as I always do. He has wonderful wisdom that comes from the north and, I guess, from some of the more rural places of this province.

He talked about broad-based relief, and I think that's what is being lost here in all of this debate. He has hit on the most key aspect: What kind of government program is going to help the most people?

As I listened to him, he was talking about taking the HST off hydro. I must say that I agree with the comments that he had to make. If you want to help the most people, you will give broad-based relief, not specific relief that only a few people will take advantage of. To hear members of the government, they talk as if every senior is going to have \$10,000, or a major portion thereof, and every senior is going to want to invest that in his or her house. The reality is—as the member from York West said, he has many poor seniors. I would ask him: Do most of those poor seniors live in subsidized units or rental properties? I think the answer he would tell, in all honesty, would be yes, and it is those people who would receive almost nothing of benefit from this bill.

Who will receive benefit are those seniors who have the wherewithal, the financial money to put down in order to put in an elevated device, a new bathroom, a ramp. Those are the seniors who will see some return on



their investment. Others will not. And as the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka clearly put out, the idea of affecting every single senior, of giving the money to those who are most in need, is where this government should be headed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. That concludes the time for questions and comments.

I now return to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his response: two minutes.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the member from Welland and the members from York West, Elgin–Middlesex–London and Beaches–East York for their comments.

I'd like to come back to the point that I think removing the HST from hydro and home heating bills would be much more effective, and I quote a letter from E.R. Brown from Katrine in my riding. In it they say, "I am a senior with a fixed income, and like other seniors it is a shame we have to pay a tax on home heating in Canada. Heating your home is a necessity of life. You cannot live without heat or you will die. I cannot think of any country in the world that taxes a necessity of life. I think the removal of this tax should be the first order of business that this government must do, and do now. Please do not think a tax refund is the thing to do. That is wrong." He specifically says to take the tax off of heating/electricity bills and home heating instead of a tax refund, so it's very much exactly what we're talking about today.

I got a letter from another constituent, Brock Napier, who was writing about the NDP proposing to eliminate the HST on the home heating bill, which we did support, which passed in this new minority Parliament. But he writes, "The purpose of this letter is that the same proposal is applied to all those residents who heat their homes with hydro.

"I understand the PCs support this bill, so please make sure every homeowner is covered."

So I've got all kinds of emails and letters from constituents in my riding, and I'm sure other members do across the province. That's what seniors would like to see: more broad-based relief than this very, very narrow bill we see before us.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to take today's opportunity to follow a little bit of tradition and give the members a little bit of a brief background of where I came from and what Algoma–Manitoulin is composed of.

I'm happy to see certain individuals in this room, because I think it's important. I look at my fellow knight across the way from Elgin–Middlesex–London, and I'm quite pleased you're here, because we share many values in our community, and as family and as fathers of our children. It's really nice to have you here during my maiden speech.

This particular bill that we're talking about, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, is one that I'm really struggling with. Although we do see benefits coming out of it—and it would be actually foolish to deny those individuals who can actually secure those benefits in it—it really doesn't help the masses. That's where my concern is with this particular bill and what I'm struggling with. It sure is not what I heard from the people up in Algoma–Manitoulin as I was travelling through—the doors, the many community events and the people I have spoken to. A little bit more immediate relief is what they need: immediate relief as far as more affordability for themselves, immediate relief where they can see an actual figure in front of them that won't cost them up front. That's what I've been hearing from them.

Now, having said that, I do come from a very politically inclined family, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention a couple of individuals that have really encouraged me in my path as I was leading into my role as a politician. They would be my uncle Eldon Mantha in Gogama, who has been a very strong supporter of mine. Just across the way from him, where I lived for many years when I raised my family, is my *pépère*, although he's not my grandfather; he's my grandfather by marriage, and I'm quite honoured to call him my *pépère*. His name is *pépère* Bidoux, who always has something to say about anything that goes on in this Legislature, and it's always a joy to sit down with him.

I'll start with my uncle Eldon. We don't have the same political views; however, he's always been supportive of me as his nephew and how it was important for me to understand both sides—not make a decision, but really understand both sides so you can make an informed decision as to where you're going and what you're doing for your constituents.

That's why it was quite pleasing for me—it was really a no-brainer—to go forward in presenting the private member's bill on removing the HST on home heating. You know, the first thing he said was, "Good for you. Good for the NDP doing something that was actually part of your message. Good for you."

However, his reserves, knowing his background, were, "You know, you're going to be fighting an uphill struggle, Mike, but don't give it up. Make sure you get there. Make sure you continue to fight for those who have asked for the help." And that's a commitment I gave to him.

As for my *pépère* Bidoux, there's a different story. Every time I sat down with him, he gave me a message. He said, "Mike, I want you to go to Queen's Park and get me some grants for my windows and get me some grants for my doors. That's what I want you to do."

Well, I told him, "You know, *pépère*, there are some opportunities there."

"Yeah, but it's gonna cost me. I don't want to have anything that costs me. I can't afford it."

I understand what he's telling me: Today everything is getting more expensive, and he doesn't have those savings. When you're in a small community in the north



like Gogama, where Sudbury, on one side, is two hours away, and Timmins, on the other side, is an hour away, you've got medical appointments, you've got doctors and you've got groceries to go pick up, you know, the costs add up, and you throw on the HST on their home. Well, you know what? The savings that he's accumulated his entire life are gone and have been gone for a long time. So he's suffering with that.

But he's telling me, "I want you to go there and do the best that you can," and that's something I can tell him and assure him that I'm going to do.

Now, many of the constituents I represent in Algoma-Manitoulin are in the same boat as my uncle Eldon and my père Bidoux. Seniors are looking for help. They're reaching out. They're asking their politicians and their leadership, "Listen. Listen to us. Really listen to us, and help us where we know we need help. We don't need help with counters. We don't need help with doorways. We need immediate financial help," which is something that could benefit them, and that's removing the HST.

1430

Again, this piece of legislation is a good initiative. It's going to help some but it certainly won't help the mass, and that is my biggest concern with this.

You know, having said that, it begs to ask the question: I've got two of my loved ones and many of my constituents that are affected by this. Look at yourselves and look within. Look deep inside of yourselves and say and realize that this is definitely something that most of your constituents would benefit from. Instead of looking at the tax credit, look at the HST, because it is going to bring an immediate relief to everyone.

Having said that, I thought it was important for me to continue with the story to introduce myself to this Legislature and also to introduce what Algoma-Manitoulin is composed of. I want to let you know that my father, Bucko, was a man that worked through the MNR—worked his entire life, worked hard. However, as a young man, I lost him quite early. I didn't have that opportunity to have that game of pool with him or have that beer. But he did give me a lot of good traits, and one of them is, always be firm with your kids, but love them. Be tough, but make sure that you have an open heart when you're listening to them and always smile and have a good sense of humour when you're doing things. You will get more honey that way than in any other way. You will get a better reception, and the person that you're talking to, whether it is across the way or on the phone, will respond to that.

My mother, Rita Mantha, was involved in everything and anything. As a youth, many times I found myself asking questions: "Where is she? What is she doing?" She was helping her community. She was helping her church. She was helping First Nations. What she was doing was helping. It's something that she always did. It was her calling, and you know what? She put that little seed inside of me. That little seed has started to grow and has brought me here into this Legislature, and I look forward to growing relationships with everybody across

the way, everybody across this side, everybody in the Legislature. I look forward to growing those relationships.

With Mom, we worked on many campaigns, both provincial and federal. We worked tirelessly. It was something that was in our blood. My uncle, Conrad Carriere, also ran in 1987. He was, however, unsuccessful, but this win for me is like it was his win. He was so proud that somebody actually is going forward and bringing some of the family values that we had and that we wanted to share with Ontarians. It was ma tante Lucille who was the first to pick up the phone and give me a call the night that I had won the election.

Vous savez, ma mère était extrêmement intégrée dans les politiques et puis elle m'a vraiment allumé quand on s'est rendu à Timmins. On était là pour une convention et puis maman s'est présentée en avant—elle était une jeune demoiselle de Gogama et elle voulait tant se rendre à une convention à Ottawa. Elle a pris la parole et s'est adressée à la convention et a dit : « Rita Mantha de Gogama, veux, veux pas, elle s'en va à Ottawa. »

Tout le monde dans la salle s'est levé et a apprécié que maman, elle avait fait ça. Puis, vous savez, elle y a été, à Ottawa. Et puis c'est une attitude de même que ma mère m'a donnée et mise dans le corps, qu'on peut faire un changement si tu travailles et tu travailles fort.

My mom would be thrilled today. Unfortunately, she passed away a few years ago, and she would be my biggest fan right now. She's here. She's here. I hear her; she's here. She has her way of giving me a little bit of advice when I need it. She has a way of giving me a little bit of direction when things are tough, when the decisions are tough to be made. It's her good sense of family that has provided me with the good traits that I need to make good decisions for the constituents of Algoma-Manitoulin, and I truly look forward to representing them as best as I can and according to abilities that I have.

As a young man, I started my life in the forestry sector. I had my two sons, Matthieu and Roch, and my best friend in life, which is my wife, Pauline. From that point on, I started asking questions, because as a father, that's what you do. You don't always accept what is being given to you. So, with the assistance of my community, co-workers, friends and neighbours, they pushed me forward and supported me in asking those questions. Lo and behold, I didn't know but that's where my political career started getting moulded. People started looking at me, and I started listening, in a different way.

From there, I got involved in the labour movement. The labour movement prepared me with the tools that I needed to do this exact job: to do the research, to do the resources, to find the connections, to do the networking, to ask the questions, to send the letters. Those are essential tools that you need to do this job. I don't think there's a manual that can train us to do this job. You have to learn, you have to do it because it's inside of you. It's something that you feel, it's a calling to you, and I think that every single person that's in this Legislature has that calling.



There's another wonderful woman that was introduced in my life, during a time where I was faced with a lot of difficulties. Not just myself, but the forestry sector took a really bad downturn a few years ago. A woman by the name of Lillian Roe—she comes from the Goulais River area—provided me with a huge tool. The tool is how to listen to people, how to really listen when individuals are talking to you so that you can recognize the signs and identify with what their needs are. She is an amazing woman, and if ever you cross her path, you'll be so fortunate for being a student in one of her classes.

While I was working at the resource centre up in Dubreuilville, this was one of the most gratifying jobs I've ever done. You know, the most remarkable part about doing that job is that I was there helping them, but unknowingly to them, they were actually helping me, because I was as affected as they were. By building those relationships with those communities, by getting them the education they were looking for, by dealing with the people that were stressed because they couldn't buy those Christmas presents for their kids, by getting the various service providers into the communities so that we could provide them with the support that they need, the seeds started growing. The seed that my mother had laid into me started growing from that point and I was starting to identify with where my calling was going.

Further opportunities came through my friend, my colleague and my prior employer, Carol Hughes, who's the federal member for Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing. Again, I had an opportunity to be part of her team—and what a team we had. It was the best thing that you can actually do when you see someone do something and get an action by listening. It was a commitment and it was actually a benefit to the entire region, and it is one of the greatest reasons why I have the honour and the privilege of standing here representing the people of Algoma-Manitoulin.

I want to talk to you a little bit about Algoma-Manitoulin. It's a huge riding. It covers a vast area from Killarney all the way into Manitouwadge. Let me start in the northern region of Algoma-Manitoulin, where you have communities such as Manitouwadge, Hornepayne, White River, Dubreuilville, Wawa, Chapleau. Do you know what all of these communities have in common? Every single one of them has a good forestry-based industry there.

**Interjection:** Used to.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Hold on; I'm getting to that.

Unfortunately, the other thing they have in common is that they have closed mills, they have closed businesses, they have empty homes, they have empty streets, and they have empty schools because the kids have moved on. The list goes on, but we won't go into that many details.

However, the nice thing about the region and the best thing about that region is that you have a group of mayors and community activists who are determined that they will not go quietly and that they will not quit. That is not an option to them. "No" is not an option; "no" is not

an answer to them. And you know what? It's something that I've carried here, in my role, to Queen's Park: "No" is not an option.

1440

I firmly believe that there are a lot of things we can bring, not only to Algoma-Manitoulin but to Ontario. I firmly believe that, and we have that opportunity. It's there. We've just got to grasp it.

The next region I want to talk about covers from Batchawana Bay to Prince, Goulais, Echo Bay, Bruce Mines, Desbarats, Wharncliffe, Thessalon—hold on; I'm not done. Let's go down to Iron Bridge, Blind River, North Shore, Huron Shores, all the way across to Nairn Centre. These, again, are wonderful communities with local businesses and health care systems that are very much in the tourism aspect of things. A lot of the communities here migrate and go into the larger centres, which at one end is Sudbury and at the other is Sault Ste. Marie. But a lot of them want to stay home. With the extra schedules in the mining sector and the long work hours, the different schedules—seven in, seven off—they have that ability to stay home. Also, within this area, I have a very strong farming and agricultural sector.

The major community in my riding is Elliot Lake. Elliot Lake has a very large senior population. About 36% of them are above the age of 65: the perfect pilot project for a health care system, if we look at this community. I'll tell you why: It's because this is actually a community that many communities in Ontario will be about 10 to 15 years from now. But we have this one in our lap right now where we can implement a good pilot project on how we're going to address the crisis in our health care system going forward. Let's not forget that.

The journey continues, and I'm going to head into Espanola, where a strong paper mill is the major employer. Then, I've got my two gems: St. Joe's Island and Manitoulin Island, two of the most scenic areas in the province, if not in this country. I invite everybody to go to cherish and visit these areas. They are the best. You feel so welcome there. You are accepted as one of their own. On St. Joe's Island, they're going to be celebrating their bicentennial of the War of 1812 at Fort St. Joseph. It's going to be a very monumental thing, and the island will be in full bloom. So I invite you all. And you will find no better powwow trails in the summer than on Manitoulin Island.

Now, I can't forget the diamond in the rough that is Killarney, which has—and I kid you not—the best fish fry restaurant, bar none, in Ontario. People fly in to there from the States. It is the best, and it is well worth your going to have a visit.

My journey goes on—and by the looks of it, Speaker, I'm going to run out of time. But since I'm a rookie—I'm almost done—you're not going to cut me off when I say thank you to my family.

Anyway, I really want to acknowledge the prior MPP from Algoma-Manitoulin, Mr. Mike Brown. He served as an MPP in this Legislature, and also as a Speaker. He did it for 24 years. I also want to acknowledge his con-



stituency staff, whom I personally developed a working relationship with. Both Tom Farquhar and Sherrie Perron are exceptional people and dedicated to the job they did for the constituents of Algoma-Manitoulin. I look forward to building on the friendship we have developed.

I'm going to be missing a few things here, and it's unfortunate, but I would be very disappointed if I didn't thank my family.

To my boys, Roch and Matthieu: Thank you, mes boys. Dad s'en vient. Je vais être là pour vous-autres bientôt. I know we missed hunting season this year, but I'll make it up to you somehow, somewhere, some way. I promise you. Dad will be there when you need him.

To my wife, Pauline: Ma belle, je t'adore. Patient and ever-loving, you have given me everything and more. It's just too bad that you're not here with me in Toronto at times, at some of these ceremonies, some of these events. You deserve it as much as I do. I know you're here with me. The only reason why I'm here is because you're able to hold the fort back home.

Merci, Matthieu. Merci, Roch. Merci, Pauline. Je t'adore, Pauline. C'est tout, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much for your presentation. Merci.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** First of all, I want to congratulate the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for his election to this assembly on behalf of the people of his community.

I really appreciated his speech. I really appreciated a journey through his beautiful riding, which I have not had the opportunity yet to visit, but I look forward to taking up his invitation and coming down.

I really appreciated his acknowledgement of the previous member from the riding, Mike Brown, who worked very, very hard in representing that community. We say thank you to Mike for his public service to this Legislature and to the people of Ontario.

I look forward, obviously, to the opportunity of working with the member from Algoma-Manitoulin on issues that are important to our communities across the province. The realities may differ slightly in a riding like mine, Ottawa Centre, which is a very urban, downtown community, from those of Algoma-Manitoulin. But I think, at the end of the day, the dreams and aspirations are the same: that we want to build a strong, prosperous province, where people have good-paying jobs and are able to enjoy a quality life.

I do want to bring it back a little bit to the Healthy Homes Renovations Tax Credit, the legislation, Bill 2, which is up for debate at this moment. I know that the member believes in helping our seniors. We really strongly feel and believe that this is a good measure to do so. This particular bill, this particular tax credit, is going to assist seniors so they can continue to live in their own home.

Every senior that I have spoken to, including my parents, and then those who live in my community, while meeting them at various events or when going to their homes, they tell me that they do not want to live in a

long-term-care facility; they want to live in their own home. They want assistance in ensuring that they can make adaptations to their homes that will help them continue to live in their own homes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I would also like to congratulate the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for his election to this Legislature.

I also want to thank him for his maiden speech, obviously, and for some fatherly advice that is somewhat timely to myself, as Sarah and I will be expecting a new baby boy this coming February, so thank you for that.

I also want to commend you on your most recent private member's bill, that unfortunately was voted against in this chamber.

Back to Bill 2: I share some similar concerns about this bill. I believe this Liberal bill is out of touch with the realities faced by families and seniors in our province who struggle to make ends meet and who are oftentimes considering home renovations to be an unaffordable luxury.

Over the course of the election, I had the real opportunity to travel throughout my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, where I came across a retired gentleman, Bill, who lived up in Elmira, who told me, when coming to the door, he simply couldn't afford to live in his home.

Throughout the election, our leader, Tim Hudak, often described speaking to seniors who came to the door, shaking, with their hydro bill in their hands, telling us how afraid they were to open their hydro bill, being that they were afraid to see how much their next bill would be. Simply, seniors can't afford to live in their own homes, let alone have \$8,500 lying around to do frivolous renovations.

Just today, in fact, the Auditor General confirmed that the Liberal McGuinty policies are driving up hydro bills well beyond what was promised. In addition to that, Ontario seniors like Bill, the gentleman from Elmira, will be sad to hear the fact that \$1.8 billion was paid to New York and Quebec to take our excess energy.

We need to get our house in order. Unfortunately, the member's bill that failed in this House, about taking the HST off home heating, would have been the wiser direction to go.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** First of all, I'd like to welcome the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. He is going to be a strong member of our caucus. He speaks very well in both languages, and he has been very effective already.

Just to correct the record, the member from Kitchener-Conestoga is a bit wrong. That bill did pass. Bill 4 passed second reading in this House, and it's now going on to committee and hopefully to level three, and then to royal assent, which will make it law. So it did pass, actually, thanks to co-operation from this side of the House.



1450

I'd just like to touch on all the accolades that are being thrown around by the other side about this Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. Well, Mr. Speaker, I did a little figuring out, a little number crunching, and they're saying if you spend \$10,000 on a renovation for your home, which most elderly people in this province cannot do—they'd be lucky if the bank would lend it to them to do it. And even if they could do it, they're forgetting one major thing: their little HST. If you borrow \$10,000 to do the renovation, and they're going to give you \$1,500 back, you're actually going to pay \$1,300 in tax on the \$10,000. So they're giving you a whopping \$200 credit, and you'll be lucky, up north, if that'll pay for your heating bill for one week.

So it's no break. It's another shell game that the Liberals are playing. It's another shell game: make it look like they're giving you a big credit when they're not. You're not going to benefit from this whatsoever. I wish they would be up front about their HST and how much it's going to cost the people of this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I too want to congratulate the member for Algoma-Manitoulin on his victory and welcome him to the Legislature.

Because it was part of his maiden speech, I'm not going to dwell a whole lot of time on the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, but simply highlight a couple of things. The member from Algoma-Manitoulin made a couple of very, very salient points that I think we should all keep in mind. Yes, you'd better thank and love your wife every single, solitary day for the sacrifices that she and your two boys are going to make; certainly appreciate the incredible support you get from them on an ongoing basis because, as you stay in this place for any length of time, you realize just how important they are and just how much that encouragement helps you in doing your job.

I'm happy that you thanked Mike Brown and recognized his incredible work ethic. He was the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for a long time, Speaker, as you know, and he worked very, very hard. For you to recognize that shows a great deal of class on your part.

The member does come from one of the most beautiful parts of Ontario. I would dare say that Algoma-Manitoulin is an incredible tourist destination, not only because of its natural beauty but because of the beauty of its people as well.

I do want to welcome the member as my critic. We've already had some discussions with regard to northern development and mines. I look forward to those continuing and ongoing discussions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Algoma-Manitoulin can now reply.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'd like to thank the members from Ottawa Centre, Kitchener-Conestoga, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for their comments. They were

well received. As a rookie, I forgot I had an extra two minutes, so I'm going to finish off my speech. Thank you very much.

You know, during the campaign, you see a lot of people, and you see a lot of each other as opponents. I also want to acknowledge Justin Tilson, David Hoffman and Joe Chapman, the mayor of Little Current. They continue to serve their communities. They were true gentlemen during the entire campaign. It was a privilege and an honour to share the stage with you during that time.

Now, my army was a big one. We had Team North, which was based in Wawa, where Marilyn Keddy, Andre Beddard, Luc Gagne, Sherry Gray, Stan and Noella Godin, Chantal Mantha, Alain and Brigitte Cyr, Melanie Groulx, George Evans and many, many others were there supporting me. And there was also my best friend—my best friend—Marc Beland, who is a teacher at Michipicoten High School. Go Vikings!

Team West in Echo Bay was led by Gregg Meehan, Bud and Jody Wildman, Glen Humphreys, Gerry Neaves, Howard Bowes and, again, many, many others.

Team Central—it's a huge riding; I wasn't kidding. In Elliot Lake you had Ann Robichaud, Craig McDowell, Sean Hill, Donna Reed, Carolyn Donaldson, my best friend Carol Hughes, Dawn Lalonde, Ted Smith and, again, many, many others that I know that I'm missing.

Now, you've got to bring them all together and you've got to have a quarterback or, should I say, a general behind the team, and that was Sharon Clark, who was my campaign manager. To you, Sharon, you became my second wife during the campaign, and I thank you immensely. You did what we were supposed to do. You kept me on track, and from the bottom of my heart, thank you, Sharon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Kitchener-Conestoga on a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to correct my record, that the private member's bill introduced by the member for Algoma-Manitoulin did in fact pass, of course, with the support of our caucus, the Ontario PC Party. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** It's my pleasure to speak to this bill, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. I've listened to the debate thus far, and while there are a lot of very general statements and musings about what the bill is about and what it does and what it doesn't do, there haven't been a lot of facts put on to the record, so what I intend to do is a few general comments and then I want to get into the nitty-gritty, the details of the bill, because I think it's important when we're debating these matters to know what is actually said and what isn't said.

We, as an Ontario government, are very keen to move forward with programs that do two things: one, address the needs of families, and in this particular case seniors; and at the same time strengthen the economy. If we can marry those two goals, that's good for Ontario.



The Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit would do a couple of things. It's going to help seniors stay in their homes longer. That's good for seniors, that's good for our long-term health care costs, and so on. It's going to help family members who are sharing a home with a senior, and there are many, many situations where the generations are living together. They can live comfortably and, indeed, happily and mutually supportive of each other. But in most cases, it does require some adjustments to the physical environment. This bill will address that.

This will benefit the taxpayers of Ontario by taking the pressure off the expensive costs of maintaining seniors in long-term home care facilities rather than allowing them to stay in their own homes or in the homes of their children. That's a saving to the Ontario taxpayer and it also is a good thing for Ontario families and their seniors.

This will provide about 10,500 jobs a year, the economists tell us. It will support about \$800 million in home renovation activity. That's good for our economy. That means jobs for renovators and contractors; that means companies are paying more taxes; that means the construction workers are paying more in taxes. That's good for all of us.

Now, if the bill passes, then, effective October 1, 2011—that's two months ago now—senior homeowners and tenants and people who share a home with a senior relative—and that's very important: people who share a home with a senior relative—would be allowed to claim a refundable tax credit of up to \$1,500 for expenses related to permanent modifications. To continue to meet the fiscal targets, the cost of this program will be offset by savings in other areas.

There is some experience we can look to, to see how this program is likely to play out. If the take-up on our program in Ontario is similar to the federal 2009 home renovation tax credit, approximately up to 380,000 people could potentially benefit from this credit each year. That is a significant number: 380,000 people.

**1500**

Let me say something now about how you go about claiming the tax credit, because I think seniors and their families and others who are potentially likely to claim the tax credit would like to know that to claim the tax credit, seniors or their family members would have to do a couple of things.

One, they've got to get receipts from suppliers and contractors.

The credit would be calculated as 15% of up to \$10,000 in total eligible expenses for a senior's principal residence in Ontario for a calendar year, for a maximum of \$1,500 each year. That credit would be claimed on the personal income tax return.

Now, a lot of people say, "Well, what kind of renovation expenses would this cover?" I've had a lot of calls in the constituency office saying, "Can I do this? Can I do that? Would it cover this? Would it cover that?" and so on. So let me go through a number of examples, and the

viewers and members of this Legislature, when I go through the sample list, will get a clear sense of just what we mean by "renovation"; that is, what is eligible.

Here are some examples, but not a comprehensive list: certain renovations to permit first-floor occupancy or secondary suites, something that we know colloquially as granny suites or in-law suites; grab bars and related reinforcements around the toilet, bathtub and shower; handrails in corridors; wheelchair ramps; stair and wheelchair lifts and elevators—those are the things you see advertised on the television if you have problems with your hips and arthritis and walking, a kind of lift that goes up the side of the stairwell—bath lifts; walk-in bathtubs; wheel-in showers; widening passage doors in the home; lowering existing counters and cupboards or installing adjustable counters or cupboards; light switches and electrical outlets placed in accessible locations; door locks that are easy to operate; lever handles on doors and taps instead of the twist knobs. I can tell you, that was a particular problem for my own mother, who had some difficulties with arthritis in her hands. She had a terrible time turning the taps. She would be very happy to see this particular item.

Pull-out shelves under the counter to enable work from a seated position: Think of all of the seniors in wheelchairs who have their cupboards and they can't stand and they can't reach up.

Non-slip bathroom flooring: That sounds like a relatively innocuous thing, but when you talk to your own families and talk to your friends and talk to your relatives and talk to your neighbours, what's the thing that you most often hear about? You hear about someone's mother, someone's grandmother, someone's elderly sibling, sister or brother, and they've slipped in the shower. They've broken their hip; they've broken their arm. They are now in the hospital. The hip hasn't repaired, and they can't come back home. They're now looking for long-term care.

Just imagine if we can save a thousand or a couple of hundred people, whatever number of people, from falling in the bathroom and breaking their hips, keeping them at home rather than sending them off to long-term care. Think of what that means to them as an individual. They can stay in the home they've lived in for years and years and years. They can stay out of long-term care. That's good for them. That's a saving for the taxpayer. I dwell on that because think that's probably the simplest and most understandable example.

A hand-held shower on an adjustable rod or high-low mounting brackets for adjustable showers; additional light fixtures throughout the home and exterior entrances. How many times have you heard about the senior, somebody who took a fall on the steps? They were out picking up the newspaper or they were out trying to put out the garbage, and they slipped because of bad lighting and so on.

Swing-clear hinges on doors to widen doorways; creation of knee space under the basin to enable use from a seated position; insulation of hot water pipes; relocation



of tap to front or side of the sink for easier access; hands-free taps, again for arthritic hands; motion-activated lighting. I had a situation of a constituent who was out last year—it was after 6 o'clock in the evening, so there was early darkness. They were struggling to find the light switch to turn on the porch light, and they fell and broke their hip. They're still in a long-term-care home.

If the light switch had been motion-activated, that accident may not have happened. That's a simple matter. We're providing financial support to cover that. Again, I come back to it the third or fourth time: That's good for their quality of lifestyle; that's good for their peace of mind and their family's peace of mind; it's good for the Ontario taxpayer.

Touch-and-release drawers and cupboards, and drawers that pull out fully; modular or removable versions of a permanent fixture, such as modular ramps and non-fixed bath lifts—those are some of the examples.

I think, when you reflect on some of the examples that I've given, you get a very clear picture of the very practical efficacy of this legislation.

The detailed rules about the eligibility—I've just given maybe 15 or 20 examples—the specific rules for the eligibility will be set out in the legislation. The list that I've gone through is not in any way complete. However, it's subject to this limitation: Expenses would not be eligible if the primary purpose is really that someone is trying to increase the value of their home. That might be, for example, repairs to a roof; redecorating; a new window set or flooring or landscaping; heating and air conditioning, that sort of stuff. The renovations that you get the tax credit for have got to be specific to the lifestyle needs of the senior, of the applicant.

Let me give you perhaps two practical working examples, because I really think that it's important for our listeners to understand the details and the mechanics of this, rather than just hear a debate going on about whether it should be HST or it shouldn't be HST and the very general comments that we've heard in the debate thus far.

I'll take the hypothetical couple of Sally and Joe. They're a retired couple; they're in their late 60s. They own a home in Willowdale, I'll say, because that's my riding.

Joe's difficulty in getting up the stairs has meant that the couple had to install a stairlift so Joe can access the second storey of the house. Sally and Joe have paid a contractor \$6,000 for the purchase and installation of the stairlift. They would keep their receipt, they would claim \$6,000 on their 2012 tax return and they'd get a direct tax credit of \$900.

Let me give you a second example. This is an example of an Ontario citizen who is living with a parent. Anita lives with her 75-year-old mother in a rented apartment in—I'll take your riding, Thunder Bay, over there. Anita paid \$500 to have grab bars permanently installed in her bathroom to make it safer for her mother to get in and out of the bath. That's a common situation that I'm sure all members with aging parents are familiar with. Anita

would keep her receipt and she'd claim \$500 on her 2012 tax return for a direct tax credit of \$75.

For the 2012 tax year only, the \$10,000 maximum would apply to expenses paid or payable from October 1, 2011, to December 31, 2012.

I hope members are getting a sense from some of my—they may seem to be pedestrian comments, but again, I think it's important to understand what the legislation actually does, what it actually covers and so on.

The Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit is going to help seniors to stay healthy. It's going to help them to live with dignity and independence in the comfort of their homes for as long as possible.

I hear from many seniors, in my experiences in Willowdale and my experience with my own family: "If only I could have had bathroom railings installed, if only I could have had a lift ramp, I could have stayed there longer."

1510

It costs taxpayers more to provide care in long-term-care homes than to a senior who lives in his or her own home or lives with a family member, typically one of their children.

The proposed tax credit is projected—because I have had questions about this: What's the total cost of this program?—to cost in the order of \$60 million for 2011-12. This would be funded—because the other part of the question is: Where is the money going to come from?—by lowering spending on existing business support programs in the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, as well as lower-than-forecast costs for a number of tax-related expenditures in the Ministry of Revenue. These savings will fully offset the cost of the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit.

Let me just say now a few words about other things that we're doing to support seniors, because the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit is really only a part of the whole; it's a part of the gestalt. We have been working over the years on a number of initiatives to ensure that Ontario seniors enjoy the highest standard of living by providing the best possible health care and support in other ways that will support their lifestyles, so that they can maintain a healthy lifestyle and they don't have to find themselves in need of these more dramatic things, like moving into a long-term-care home before it's really necessary.

Here are some things that we've done since 2003. I was elected to this Legislature in 2003. Before that I had done a lot of work with seniors' issues; I had done a lot of work on Alzheimer's issues and other things. One of the things that attracted me to the party was its sensitivity, awareness and commitment to issues that would make the lives of seniors easier, happier and more rewarding. That's why, for instance, one of the things I'm most proud of is proposing and getting through this Legislature, on an all-party basis, the first Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Ontario, which has now been hooked



up and runs parallel to the United Nations Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

But we've done a number of things, and I just want to get some of them on the record here. We've done a number of enhancements to the Energy and Property Tax Credit for Seniors; that, in itself, is providing tax relief to about 740,000 seniors. They're eligible for \$1,025 annually. So we add that on to the healthy homes tax credit—you see where we're going.

**Personal income tax cuts:** On average, 93% of income taxpayers are getting a tax cut and are now saving about \$200 a year. In fact, 90,000 Ontarians are no longer paying any provincial income tax, and a great proportion of that number are seniors.

We have the Ontario Sales Tax Credit, which provides an annual payment of about \$260 for every senior, in addition to the existing GST tax credits.

Something my friends opposite should be very happy about are the Seniors in the North Initiative: Northern residents who pay rent or property taxes for their principal residence are eligible for a tax credit up to \$130 for a single person, \$200 for a family.

We have the Ontario senior homeowners' property tax credit: Eligible seniors continue to receive additional assistance with their property taxes through the Ontario senior homeowners' property tax credit. We started that in 2009; the maximum grant was doubled to \$500 in 2010. We announced that in the 2008 budget. Our government is providing about \$1 billion over the next five years through this grant to more than 600,000 seniors from low and middle incomes who own their own homes.

**Increasing access to locked-in accounts:** That's on the reforms that we've introduced to the rules for locked-in accounts so that seniors and other Ontarians can access those funds in their needier years. We increased unlocking from the Ontario life income fund to 50%, up from 25%, in 2010. We provided a two-year waiver of fees for financial hardship unlocking applications. That was effective back in April 2009. We've done work in generic drugs. We've done work in pension and retirement income security for seniors. We've done work in improving home care services, great initiatives in retirement homes. We have the Aging at Home strategy, which we announced in 2007. That's a four-year, \$1.1-billion strategy. That sort of dovetails and fits in with the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. We've done tremendous initiatives in long-term-care homes. Elder abuse I have mentioned.

I say all of these things in addition to my detailed comments on the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit because this is a government that is committed to the welfare of seniors. They did so much for this province when they were in their prime years that we as legislators owe it to them, we as a government owe it to them and we as citizens of Ontario owe it to them.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I thank the member for Willowdale for his comments.

Questions and comments? I'll turn to the member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My friend over there—and he is my friend. I kid around a fair amount, but I've got to tell you, the member from Willowdale, as one senior speaking to another, and we've heard about age today, Kool-Aid is not that good to drink after you're 65, and you've taken an awful lot of it, number one. Number two, much has been made today of my age. You're older than me and you should know better.

I do agree with you on the last parts of your comments, that the seniors of our province are the people who really built the province, who gave us the prosperity that, frankly, is being eaten away now. They deserve better than a bill that slices and dices to get down to the point where it benefits almost nobody. I find the numbers that obviously have been provided to you by your research people, which say that maybe 380,000 seniors would take advantage of a credit like the healthy homes tax credit—I respectfully disagree with that. There are 1.8 million seniors in total, people above 65, in the province of Ontario now. They're divided into rich, middle-class and poor. The rich people are going to do what they want to do regardless of whether you give them a credit or not. The poorer people can't afford \$10,000 or any portion of that. The middle people are then parsed into the folks who require some kind of help and who don't require some kind of help because there are so many caveats on this thing about who qualifies and who doesn't qualify.

Last but not least, I want to bring forward a point. If you spent the whole \$10,000 on something—it doesn't matter what—you'd be paying HST, of which \$800 would be your provincial portion. When you give back the \$1,500 in the credit, you're actually only giving back \$700 net. So the government should not be pulling the wool over people's eyes by that kind of debate and by this kind of a tax credit, and should take into consideration what could have been accomplished with much broader-based credits, like electricity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank the member from Willowdale for his submission. However, there are a few holes in it, like Swiss cheese.

He says that they're going to allow \$1,500 for \$10,000 worth of work. Hmm, let's take a look at this. HST: There is no mention of that in there. There's HST on parts and supplies, for starters. Then we're going to pay HST on the services provided by the tradespeople to install it. If it amounts to \$1,500, just the HST alone on parts and, I think, on services will exceed \$1,300 by far by the time you pay for all the different contractors to come in, depending on what value you can get, so you've actually saved nothing.

Once again, our Liberal friends are playing the shell game. Then, if we don't vote for it, they're going to say, "Oh, you don't want to help the seniors of Ontario." But I really would like to help them. And if you really want to



help them, member from Willowdale, I would suggest that you take the HST off of parts and supplies to do the jobs and you take the HST off the tradespeople who are doing the job for seniors.

We have seniors in this province who are living in tents in 30-below, 40-below weather. I don't think they're going to have to worry about assistive devices to get into the bathroom or out. All they need is to open the tent flap, and it might be a little chilly. Really, I think this benefit is going to benefit very, very few people in this province. I don't know too many seniors in our province on fixed incomes who can throw around \$10,000, and they'd be lucky, Speaker, if the bank will even lend it to them in the first place.

Once again, here we go with another fluff bill. Thank you.

1520

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure to make a few comments on the eloquent presentation by the member for Willowdale. We apparently all listened to his remarks, but clearly I come at what he said in a very different way from the members of the two opposition parties. He put Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, in the context of all that our government has been doing since 2003. It's yet another step forward.

I had the opportunity this last Saturday to attend the Oak Ridges Lions Club seniors' luncheon. This is a tradition. It's something that happens every Christmas, and it's a wonderful opportunity to get to talk to many seniors in my riding. Of course, I mentioned to many of them that this bill was before the House. We were hoping for all-party support because, clearly, we felt it would be of great use to them. The types of remarks I got in return really led me to feel that this was certainly something very worthwhile to do.

Many of the seniors who live in Oak Ridges purchased their homes some 40 years ago. This is a place where the lots are quite a bit larger than in our newer subdivisions, and many of these seniors have enjoyed their gardens over the last 40 years. This is home for them. It is extremely important that they have the ability to stay there as long as possible.

When we look at what this does—there has been some talk that people cannot afford \$10,000. Well, it's 15% of whatever you make as an investment that helps you stay at home, and that helps people. It's as simple as that.

I heard from my constituents that this was a good step forward. I urge everyone to support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the speech by the member from Willowdale.

I know the member from Thornhill, when he gave his comments, talked about all the caveats on being able to participate in this bill. One was mentioned by the mem-

ber from Willowdale, and that is that you can't increase the value of your home. I would simply ask—and perhaps he can respond—what's wrong with increasing the value of your home? Why have you made that a reason for not qualifying for this bill?

The member from Willowdale also talked about job creation. We hear the government talking about numbers quite often. He said that 10,000 jobs would be created. Well, we see from the Auditor General's report today that in another well-publicized job claim they made, and that was to do with the Green Energy Act, they talked about 50,000 jobs with the Green Energy Act. The problem is, as the Auditor General reports today, 30,000 of those possible 50,000 highly subsidized jobs are short-term construction jobs that will last one to three years, and then they're gone. And for each job created, because of the high energy policies of this government, we actually lose two to four jobs. So we're going backwards.

The problem with this bill is, it's going to benefit very few seniors. You have to spend \$10,000 to get \$1,500 as a tax credit. Most seniors living in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka on a fixed income simply can't afford that \$10,000. They can't afford to pay their hydro bill these days, which is why it makes much more sense to provide HST relief off of heating and home heating and electricity bills, as so many of them would like to see. And as was pointed out by the member from Thornhill, when you add the HST on to the \$10,000, you actually only get a \$700 benefit from this proposed bill that would benefit very few seniors in the province of Ontario. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time we have for questions and comments. I now return to the member for Willowdale, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I just want to touch on some of the other tax credits, because the opposition parties have been going on about the HST.

Here are some things that we've done specifically for seniors. We provided tax relief for 740,000 seniors to help them with their energy costs. As I said earlier, that's \$1,025 a year.

On average, 93% of taxpayers are saving \$200 annually, and 90,000 Ontarians aren't paying any tax at all. A goodly portion of those are seniors.

The Ontario Sales Tax Credit, a permanent sales tax credit, is an annual payment of up to \$260 for every senior in Ontario.

The Seniors in the North—I touched on that. Northern residents who pay property taxes are eligible for a credit: \$130 for a single, \$200 for a family.

The Ontario senior homeowners' property tax credit: \$500 a year. That's about \$1 billion. That covers 600,000 Ontario seniors.

We've invested \$540 million under affordable housing, and a portion of that, in the amount of \$307 million, is dedicated specifically to funding rental units for low-income seniors.



The generic drugs initiative is a huge benefit for seniors. We reformed Ontario's drug delivery system; we've got lower generic drug prices. That benefits all Ontarians, of course, but it particularly benefits seniors, who, more than the younger population, are using various drug plans. It's a huge saving to them.

When we look at all those things over the last eight years of our government, this is a government that is truly a friend of Ontario seniors. It's reflected in our legislation, it's reflected in our policy and it's reflected in the attitude of the Liberal members of this chamber.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the opportunity to address Bill 2. It's titled the "proposed home renovation tax credit for seniors." The government has coined it the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit.

The bill, on the surface at least, is designed to assist seniors to upgrade their homes for access and mobility. I say "on the surface" as, in typical McGuinty government fashion, the bill looks good from afar, but once you get a little closer, I regret to report, this legislation is far from good.

I might add that this obviously was not part of our election platform. We in this room have collectively knocked on thousands and thousands of doors. I can report that it didn't come up at the door, and I personally have knocked on several thousand doors—I accelerated my door-knocking, I guess it would be, to last April or May. People didn't send me back here to prop up the McGuinty platform, either.

Few would deny supporting initiatives providing our senior population—1.8 million strong, as has been pointed out—with some benefits and providing them with "healthy homes." But again, the name of the legislation really doesn't indicate what kind of results we're going to see from this. We're going to have to wait a few years for that. Perhaps there will be an evaluation; perhaps there will be a report from the office of the Auditor General. We've all received our report for 2011 this afternoon.

If there is one thing that the members opposite are good at—and in particular, we're seeing this now in a minority situation—it's what we refer to down my way as show and sham. Tell people what they want to hear, get the credit, get those headlines, get the report on the 6 o'clock news, and then hope that everybody forgets what really occurs down the road: what results or lack of results, or perhaps results, albeit lacklustre results, come forward. It has worked in the last two elections; I've personally witnessed this.

I know my NDP colleague next door here uses the term "shell game." I sincerely hope this is not a shell game, but when you start factoring in the real cost, when you start factoring in HST that one pays on renovations—on lumber, supplies, tile, door handles, grip handles in showers and the cost of labour and renovation—it essentially comes out as a wash. I concur with that shell game label.

1530

So, 1.8 million seniors in the province; theoretically 1.8 million people believing they're going to get some help from this government to make their homes more accessible, when many of them—most of them, as we've heard just this afternoon—won't qualify financially for the \$1,500 maximum credit in the first place. I think the McGuinty government would count on this. There's no way, obviously, 1.8 million seniors are going to get the \$1,500 credit; 1.8 million people aren't going to spend \$10,000; they won't qualify. Heaven forbid if they did. I mean, we're looking at a debt now that's heading towards \$250 billion. We're looking at a debt that's going to be approaching \$300 billion by the time this government balances the books, if they were able to balance the books at their projected target.

So a senior would have to spend up to \$10,000 to qualify for the 15% credit, ever bearing in mind they're paying HST on this. It's \$10,000 up front, as I understand. There's no grant—I think there are grants available in Quebec—and you pay HST on this. This is sounding less and less optimistic as we go along.

Poorer seniors, low-income seniors, will be no more readily able to pay \$8,500 of the \$10,000 to get this kind of a rebate. So, as has been pointed out, it helps a very small group, perhaps that group somewhere between the rich and the poor. I don't know whether the well-heeled are necessarily interested in going for these kinds of government grants anyway.

Our finance critic recently pointed out that the median income for these 1.8 million seniors in Ontario is something like \$25,000 a year; \$45,000 for a couple. How can you pay \$10,000 when you have a \$25,000 median income? So in actuality, this government is putting a \$1,500 credit out there for renovations if seniors are willing to front nearly half their annual income. That doesn't make sense, Speaker. I do know that these seniors, with a \$25,000-a-year income, are out there, Speaker, as with you, I would assume.

We met so many people at the door on fixed incomes. Invariably, when they see you show up as their elected representative, oftentimes during discussion they indicate, "I'm on fixed income. I'm having trouble paying the bills. I'm having trouble paying taxes." I heard this over and over again. We had a platform, we had some things to tell them about taking the HST off the cost of electricity and home heating, getting rid of the debt retirement charge, and I can attest that this was very well received at the door. Nobody asked me about a home renovation tax credit from this Liberal government.

So we're asking, in many cases, our most vulnerable to consider jumping through a \$10,000 hoop in order to access a largely inaccessible tax credit. The bottom line is that this credit will not help seniors on fixed incomes, in my opinion, when it encompasses half of their fixed income. I'd just suggest: Do the arithmetic on that one.

These people need help paying the bills. These people need help with taxes. I don't want to speak for others or the NDP next door, but I would think that most of us here



would be interested in helping those who need the tax credit most, not a very small percentage like a focused program like this. We need a more general universal-type program. I would vote for something like that, and I have a platform that backs that up.

I'm not the only one here that's noted the shell game, the excess of smoke and well-placed mirrors in the announcement of this initiative. People are beginning to catch on to this government's well-worn track record of promising big and delivering little.

There has been some media on this—somewhat favourable media, I will suggest. There was an article in the *Toronto Sun*. What's interesting is, when you read these articles in the *Sun* or the *Star*, it's always kind of neat to go down to the comment section to get the other side of the story.

There was a comment from Bridgette with respect to a *Sun* article, and she starts off: "Are you kidding me ... seriously think about this: seniors are struggling to pay their hydro bills along with all the other costs thrown at them by our selfish Liberal government (adding HST to most food products, gasoline etc., etc.) and they have the audacity to think seniors are going to have some hidden money to do renos by more than likely a fraudulent contractor." And she ends by saying, "Who thinks up this stuff?"

So this is a tax bill; it's a finance bill. H&R Block has a tax-talk briefing that comes out to keep people up to date, and I'll just quote in part from some of this: "The credit would be refundable, unlike the former federal Home Renovation Tax Credit, which was non-refundable. This means the credit could create a refund even if you have not paid tax during the year." Now that's a positive because, again, at the door, I meet so many people, so many seniors, and they're in an economic position where they basically don't pay taxes.

"And the government proposes to make this a permanent credit, rather than a limited time offer." We'll see on that. We know things change over time.

"No more than \$10,000 may be claimed per house, although you may be able to claim it across multiple years, as long as the maximum total is not exceeded. The credit rate is 15%," as we know, "so the maximum credit is \$1,500."

Some of the expenses:

"—renovations that create granny flats or in-law suites;

"—grab bars and other reinforcements in a bathroom"—I'm not sure how you could spend \$10,000 on grab bars;

"—bath lifts, walk-in bathtubs and wheel-in showers"—these are a little more expensive items;

"—widening of doors"—that can be very expensive;

"—lowering existing counters and cupboards;

"—lever handles on doors, rather than knobs;

"—non-slip bathroom flooring;

"—a handheld shower on an adjustable rod." Obviously, you could buy an awful lot of those for \$10,000.

It goes on to say, "Seniors who are tenants or homeowners can claim the credit. If the work is paid for by a relative or someone else outside the home, the senior living in the residence can still make the claim. Non-seniors can also make a claim if they have a senior living with them." So I sincerely hope that kind of flexibility is there in the program, and if this goes for hearings we'll hear some more details about this.

Here are some more of the comments that I've been reading coming in from the media. Now, I'm not sure who submitted this one, but a quote: "This is to be a senior-only program. Not that many low-income seniors who are just making ends meet and still in their own homes are going to spend \$10,000 or \$20,000 on renovating their bathrooms so they can get a \$1,000 or \$1,500 tax credit. The seniors that can afford to spend tens of thousands of dollars on wheelchair ramps, special tubs, shower equipment etc. would likely do it anyway. Taking the HST off home heating would save seniors more money than this one-time tax credit." Again, a 15% tax credit; compare that to 13% of HST.

There was some feedback from someone named Norm—I'm assuming it was not Norm Miller or Norm Sterling, but Norm goes on to say: "I will be getting a heating bill, but I can't afford to have renovations done. So quick thinking here, if I could average \$100 savings on my heat," that would put \$100 back into the economy.

1540

He goes on to say, "If you have a Liberal MPP, encourage them to vote for the opposition-sponsored bill to remove HST from home heating cost."

Here's some feedback from Margaret. "I am also a senior who cannot afford home renovations, as my pensions do not increase"—and again, time and time again, I heard that at the door, Speaker: the fixed-income lament. "My pensions do not increase, but my heating, hydro, taxes and insurance do. I will probably have to sell my home and move to some dinky apartment, and all because of taxes and increases."

So as you may come to realize, Speaker, this proposal for seniors is going over somewhat like a lead balloon, certainly on this side of the House or this portion of the House. We presented, in a fair amount of detail, a plan for seniors. As many will know, we focused on creating 5,000 long-term-care beds and renovating 35,000 beds over the next 10 years; doubling the caregiver tax credit for those who care for an elderly family member; increasing investments in home care; and giving seniors more control over those kinds of home care services—the options, you know: to stay with their current provider or pick another government-funded home care provider that might better serve their needs—and, if I can repeat, taking the HST off electricity and home heating fuel and getting rid of that debt retirement charge on the electricity.

Again, having talked to so many people, so many seniors, those kinds of proposals really fell on fertile ground.

One thing I wish to note that came up in question period this morning: As of January 1, 2012, all busi-



nesses will be subject—will be mandatorily required, actually—to meet the Integrated Accessibility Standards, the regulation that's under the AODA, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. There was a Liberal question to a Liberal cabinet minister this morning about that. I know that's passing strange, but the question was—and I'll just go to the question. The Liberal member asked the cabinet minister what this is going to cost: "What assurances can be made about the costs of these standards to the businesses?" There was an opportunity to announce some help. The answer we got from the minister: "Many of the standards have no costs associated with them."

Again, there is concern on Main Street with Main Street businesses: What is this going to cost them? For example, when you start thinking about wheelchair ramps, those can be very, very expensive, especially when I think of small-town Main Street businesses, many of them in older buildings, and you have to climb these steps.

I have a few minutes left, Speaker. I do wish to make reference to the report we've all received today, the 2011 report of the Auditor General. Comsoc, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, warranted a chapter: chapter 3. Again, Comsoc funds a variety of supportive programs for people with disabilities: people are encouraged to live at home, to work in their communities and to participate in their communities. The report points out that—I think this is important—"Transfer payments for supportive services totalled approximately \$571 million in the 2010-11 fiscal year." This was "an increase of approximately 68% from ... 2000-01," for a total, at that time, of \$340 million. So, on average, during that time period, we saw an average annual increase of approximately 5% over that 10 years. I'm not sure if Don Drummond and Dalton McGuinty are going to put an end to those kinds of increases. From what I read, I think that's what we're going to see. I might point out that we favour a government worker salary freeze as opposed to any thoughts of taking the axe to services.

Now, of that \$570 million that Comsoc spent in the past fiscal year, it disbursed \$472 million or about 83% of the total to transfer payment agencies—well over 400 contracts—in particular to Special Services at Home, which serves about 24,000 families. Again, these are the kinds of services that are very important for people with disabilities, including seniors: assessment, counselling, speech and language therapy, respite care and behaviour intervention services.

To summarize—and I think I have a minute left—"Many of the concerns noted in our last audit"—that's from the Auditor General—"of this program 15 years ago have still not been satisfactorily addressed." As a result, "The ministry still does not have adequate assurance that its service delivery agencies are providing an appropriate and consistent level of support in a cost-effective manner to people with developmental disabilities." This is not good, Speaker. This has obviously been going on for 15 years, in particular over the last eight years. And as the

auditor reports, it will take several years before many of the issues we identify in this report can be effectively addressed. Again, this is not good. This report from the Auditor General is not good. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Recently, the government has proposed Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act. At first glance, the bill sounds like it will help seniors. However, I think there's an opportunity for us to take this bill further.

I don't believe this bill considers the fact that the average senior is living on a nominal fixed income or meagre pension. They simply can't afford the \$10,000 out-of-pocket expense necessary to receive the proposed \$1,500 tax rebate. During the election campaign, many seniors identified skyrocketing property taxes as a chief factor influencing their ability and choice to stay in their family homes.

The Council on Aging of Ottawa affirmed that seniors are looking for affordable housing solutions, and asked our commitment to build more non-profit housing.

The proposed bill further ignores the large number of seniors living in rental accommodations throughout the province.

This proposed credit also applies to modifications done to a principal residence to support mobility and other measures. Over one full fiscal year, the proposed tax credit is expected to cost the treasury \$130 million, but lacks any real discussion on domestic content provision. Also, there are no provisions for either the construction materials or the medical assistance devices noted in the bill to be purchased in Ontario.

What help will this bill be to those Ontario seniors looking to us for meaningful solutions but who don't meet the eligibility requirements?

Additionally, introducing an unfair HST tax on home heating just compounds the issue of seniors' inability to afford to stay in their homes.

My colleagues and I want this bill to work for all seniors. We're not interested in another new program that doesn't significantly address the concerns that seniors are faced with every day.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, seniors in western Mississauga are a pretty level-headed lot. As Ontario reformed our antiquated tax system to get Ontarians into the 21st century, our seniors liked being told not merely the truth, but all of the truth.

1550

Our seniors in neighbourhoods like Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville know that their income taxes went down permanently in January 2010. Our seniors know that the senior homeowners' and property tax credits pay all of the HST on some \$13,750 worth of bills for services that had not been taxed before 2010.

The clean energy benefit doesn't merely take off the 8% HST from your electricity bill; it takes off another



2% on top of that. So why go back, as the opposition would suggest, to merely taking off 8% when the status quo—the bill that already passed, the clean energy benefit—takes off 10%, not 8%? Why they want to raise the prices of electricity an extra 2%, I really don't know.

What seniors really do need to do is to stay in their homes as they age. As homeowners move through their 70s and into their 80s, they need to add things like ramps and lifts and other assistive devices to stay in their home, and that's what this tax credit focuses on. It's for people who would like to stay and to age in the home they've lived in for years, the home they brought up their children in—and it's actually the most economic place for seniors to age. What this tax credit aims to do is to assist seniors throughout Ontario to do the simple modifications to their home, to be able to stay in their home as they get older.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Toby, that was excellent, what you had to say there. I'm not sure what doors the Liberals were actually knocking on, but at the doors that we were knocking on, the people, the seniors, were absolutely devastated on fixed incomes, and they were literally deciding whether they were going to pay their HST or buy their food for the day, for the week. It was absolutely heart-wrenching and heartbreaking to watch them come to the door, struggling with their heat and hydro bills on their fixed incomes.

When you see right now that you're making them spend \$10,000 to get a \$1,500 rebate—when actually the GST is \$1,300, so they're only going to get \$200 of that—how sad.

I am here for the voice of Burlington, to let those people hear that we have ears for them, that we heard them when door-knocking, door to door. We need to be part of those people, because they are struggling. They have worked extremely hard for their lives while they were working, and they're seniors now and they deserve a break. They deserve to live, to not worry about paying their HST bill; to not worry that they need to have food on their plate but they can't do it because they can't afford their heat and hydro bill.

So I'm here today. I totally respect what Toby had to say. It's very, very difficult for seniors, and to expect them to come up now—we should be worrying about seniors and long-term-care beds more. They're waiting 173 days, 24,000 of them. We can't be selective on a few small amounts, for political reasons, to talk about something that they clearly are not going to benefit from.

I think it's a travesty for them that we are not listening to what they have to say. I'm here today with the PC caucus, respecting the seniors and constituents in our community.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** In response to my colleague the member from Haldimand-Norfolk, he raised some very

interesting points and I'd like to expand on one of them in particular.

The proposed bill by the Liberal government requires that seniors—who, I agree, are on fixed incomes—have to jump through a lot of hoops. He used that phrase, and I want to expand on that.

Specifically, this tax credit applies to seniors who are over 65. It has to apply to devices which assist in mobility. One has to spend \$10,000 to get the \$1,500 rebate.

We're applying all of these conditions on seniors: people who are vulnerable, people in our society who are on fixed incomes. Contrast this with the corporate tax break for corporations. There are absolutely no strings attached. Why is it that we are applying so many strings, so many conditions on seniors? Why is it that seniors have to jump through so many hoops just to get their tax break but a corporation will get their tax break with absolutely no strings attached, with the simple hope that somehow this will translate into jobs for Ontarians?

Are we here just to hope that corporations will help us, or can we apply the same standards that we apply to vulnerable seniors? Can we apply those to corporations so that they are required to give us some guarantee that there will be a job created in Ontario, some guarantee that there will be a factory or machinery or equipment invested in?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** What does Toby think about that?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The member from Haldimand-Norfolk raised this issue, that there are so many hoops that seniors have to jump through.

Let's apply a more lax approach to those who are vulnerable in our society, let's apply a more fair approach to those who are less fortunate and let's apply a more stringent standard to corporations, who are, of course, better off and who are more stable.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. That concludes the time for questions and comments. I now return to the member for Haldimand-Norfolk for his reply.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To my colleagues to the left here, London-Fanshawe and Bramalea-Gore-Malton: The NDP have some very constructive contributions to this debate. I think the term "shell game" has now been inculcated within our memory of this debate, and "jumping through hoops."

It is difficult for individuals. I hate filling out forms and jumping through hoops. I'm not good at that at all. Very large companies, organizations like that, can hire people to do this for them. That really doesn't make for a very level playing field as far as individuals, in particular seniors who are trying to get a bit of a break from this government.

The member from Mississauga-Streetsville: I do encourage the government: Keep trying. You may get this right eventually. We all agree: We do have to better enable people and seniors to stay in their own homes. We've also got to beef up home care, and don't forget



about long-term care. There's been very little on that file for the last eight years.

I do want to thank Jane, the member for Burlington. Again, many people, senior or not, don't have that \$10,000 to sink into their homes.

I think looking at the bigger picture, Speaker, this is a spending bill. I'm very concerned that this government is coming forward after the election with a solution to a situation—the future is going to be very, very difficult. We have a very big problem of borrowing and spending in this legislation. What I see the solution is: borrowing and spending. I'm concerned about that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Today I will be sharing my time with the member from Davenport.

I am very honoured to stand here today and deliver my maiden speech in the Legislative Assembly. I am truly appreciative of the opportunity to introduce myself and the concerns facing the constituents of my riding of London–Fanshawe.

To begin, I want to congratulate all members on their election success, and I look forward to working collaboratively with all of you. By focusing on achievable change, I know we can get real results for the people of London–Fanshawe and the rest of Ontario.

Firstly, I want to thank the residents of London–Fanshawe for delivering a strong message on October 6. The message was one of change. They are tired of the status quo and the same old politics as usual. It is with great honour that I represent approximately 100,000 residents of London–Fanshawe, and I thank them for trusting me to be their voice in Queen's Park.

I would also like to thank my caring family. My husband, Bill, and I have been married for 22 years, and we share two lovely children, aged 21 and 19 years old. It is with their love and encouragement that I find the passion and determination necessary to take on this meaningful opportunity.

To Andrea Horwath, leader of Ontario's New Democrats: For your vision, passion and support, I sincerely thank you. Your genuine commitment to building a better Ontario by putting the focus back on the people of Ontario is inspiring. I am honoured to be a part of the amazing team we have assembled here today at Queen's Park.

Additionally, I want to thank everyone who worked on my campaign. To all the dedicated volunteers who gave up their time and shared their personal stories with me, I thank you for your hard work, dedication and trust. Together we achieved a huge success, and we connected with our community and each other on a meaningful and personal level. It was an experience I won't ever forget.

1600

I also would like to congratulate the member for Brant on his recent election as Speaker in the House. I know the Speaker will ensure that we conduct our business in a respectful manner. I hope all members here will pledge to

respect the duty and privilege of the office that we have been elected to.

Mr. Speaker, my parents emigrated to Canada from Portugal in 1968 with five young children. With very little English, my father was able to secure a job in construction while my mother stayed home to raise our family. My parents raised a total of six children, all of whom went on to get married. Now they have their own families, and they gave my parents 14 beautiful grandchildren.

Like most people, it was only as an adult that I developed a true appreciation for my parents, the obstacles they faced as newcomers and the tenacity they faced them with. The love and support my family showed me growing up made me the person that I am today, and I am so grateful to have them in my life.

As a young woman I was very independent. My family was very traditional and my four brothers and sisters were far more conservative than I was. I had a habit of shocking my family through unexpected ways. At age 16, I got my motorcycle while most other young girls were getting their car licences. At age 18, I became the first member of my family to get my Canadian citizenship. Shortly thereafter, I chose to pursue a post-secondary education away from home. Most of these actions left my parents speechless, but I was proud and determined to venture out on my own.

Not long after I completed my post-secondary education at Loyalist College, I reconnected with my loving husband and we were married. Once again, I turned heads in my family by choosing to marry outside of my culture, although my family welcomed my husband warmly. I will forever be in awe of my parents for giving me the freedom to take the risks and behave in ways that they did not fully understand.

When I look back on my personal experiences, I realize how grateful I am for my family and the many opportunities I had growing up. It gives me great pleasure to dedicate my work here in the House to all residents of London–Fanshawe to ensure they can afford and have access to the opportunities they need to develop as individuals, which will enable them to participate fully in our community.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents in southwestern Ontario are facing real issues of affordability. In London–Fanshawe, we have an unemployment rate of 9.2%, which is unacceptable. There is a real necessity for all of us here to take action by creating and protecting jobs for the long run. We must stop giving away across-the-board tax cuts to companies that are not compelled to create new jobs. I believe rewarding the job creators of this province is the right way to move forward, and I ask for all members here to support my efforts.

In London, we have emergency wards that are bursting at the seams and no real commitment to long-term-care beds. Additionally, we lost significant numbers of front-line workers in our health care system while hospital CEO salaries continued to go unchecked.

During the course of the election campaign, I had the pleasure of meeting many incredible people in my riding.



One of the many amazing people I met along the campaign trail was a woman named Marita. When Marita was undergoing treatment for breast cancer, she learned that many of the nurses who were caring for her were going to be laid off. While fighting her own battle with cancer, Marita took on a second battle: saving the nurses' jobs. Marita knew how hard the nurses worked and how much comfort they gave her. She was worried that the patients coming after her wouldn't get the same kind of care she did. While hard-working nurses were getting pink slips, the CEO of the hospital earned more than \$800,000, making him the highest-paid civil servants in London and one of the top earners in all of Ontario.

I am so grateful I had the opportunity to meet Marita, and I urge you to join her cause. Together, we have the ability to make real changes to our health care system. Our proposal to cap six-figure salaries of hospital CEOs would allow us to reinvest those savings and restore the losses of our front-line health care staff. It's clear that my constituents of London-Fanshawe are simply not confident that the health care system will be there for them when they need it.

It's time to return to a health care structure that works for all Ontarians. Ontario New Democrats won't give up on our public health care system, and I know it's an important priority for many Ontario families.

Lastly, Speaker, I want to highlight a shameful fact. Ontario has the highest tuition fees and the lowest per capita spending on post-secondary education in the country. Students saw tuitions rise more than 30% since the Liberals came to office. This is the same Liberal government that made an election promise in 2004 to the students of Ontario to freeze tuition fees. While this measure was initially welcomed by students and their families, the program was promptly rescinded after only one year.

During the most recent election, the Liberals proposed a 30% tuition rebate for only a portion of post-secondary students, and once again I believe they are missing the mark. Students across this province are demanding that we commit to long-term solutions. We must immediately address the dual problems of skyrocketing tuition fees and student debt. This government cannot honestly expect to offer a program only to half of the eligible students while doing nothing to prevent tuition fees from rising exponentially.

We also think students need us to do more, and to eliminate the interest on the provincial portion of the student loan is a good start. My riding of London-Fanshawe is home to Fanshawe College, and just outside the riding is the University of Western Ontario. I am eager to provide the students of my riding and yours with the financial relief they so desperately need.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the many challenges facing southwestern Ontario and my riding in particular, I am very pleased to acknowledge the positive efforts of many of the vibrant community organizations in London-Fanshawe. Our local business improvement association, along with the Dutch, Marconi, Islamic, Maltese and

Portuguese clubs, are just making a real difference in the lives of my constituents every day. There are so many more organizations, and I wish I could name them all today.

I do look forward to sharing the successes and the celebrations of my community with the members of this House throughout the year. It is clear that we have enormous challenges ahead of us: making life affordable, protecting and creating jobs, delivering a health care system that works, and investing in education, to name a few. I am confident that we can work together and achieve real results for the people of London-Fanshawe and the rest of Ontario, which they deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member indicated that she was going to share her time with the member for Davenport. I now turn to the member for Davenport and recognize him as well.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Congratulations to my colleague from London-Fanshawe on her first speech; very well done.

It's my privilege to be standing here today with my colleagues to represent the riding of Davenport. In the last few years, we've seen a growing movement of political engagement in my riding. We've seen new groups of young people, newcomers and seniors become more involved in our communities and involved in political organizing, some of them for the very first time.

Across the riding, individuals are looking for a place to connect. They want to be a part of the political process. Every day, I hear from constituents who are drawn to our message at the NDP because of our positive ideas about collective action and about the hopefulness when we work together. More and more people are stepping up to contribute to this movement in our riding, across the province and across this country.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who supported me through this campaign. I'd like to thank the residents of Davenport for putting their trust in me. I promise that I'll ensure your voices are heard in this Legislature.

I'd also like to thank my campaign staff and the hundreds of volunteers who gave countless hours to our shared vision. I feel lucky to have met each of you, and I look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

Finally, I'd like to thank my closest friends and family. Our families and close friends are the people who sacrifice the most to make this all possible. Through my years of work as an educator and as a social worker, I've seen first-hand the impact that public policy has on the everyday life of people in this province. I've seen the great significance of having a good teacher or having a good social worker and the incredible, positive impact when people get access to good programs and services. But I've also seen when governments fail to deliver. I've seen what happens when we don't create good jobs, when we don't invest in affordable child care or housing, when we don't provide enough supports for social services. I've seen what this means for families who are



trapped in poverty, who live in substandard housing and who are dependent on food banks to make it through each month. I decided to run for public office because I know that we cannot allow government to shrink from its responsibility to Ontarians.

1610

I'm incredibly proud to represent the great riding of Davenport. We represent the best parts of this city and this province. The people of Davenport are scrappy. Through tough times, we never give up. We work hard every day and we're always proud of our communities.

People come from every corner of the world to Davenport. We're a diverse riding with a rich and emerging history, where people have built their homes and raised their families and contributed every day to this city and province. We work in construction, in the arts, as young professionals, and we work together to create some of the most vibrant communities in this province.

Davenport residents are committed to community engagement and to social action. We are lucky to have so many active groups in our riding, from the folks at Dufferin Grove Park to the Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club, to the many BIAs and groups that organize the BIG on Bloor Festival each year, to advocates like the Clean Train Coalition or my friends at The Stop Community Food Centre.

Constituents in Davenport are doing their very best to make our province better. We need government to do their part, to take action to make life more affordable and create good jobs in Ontario and to make sure that we have a green plan for economic growth.

Across this city, people are affected by gridlock. We all want to spend more time with our families and less time stuck in traffic or waiting for a bus. Even the Toronto Board of Trade estimates that we lose \$6 billion each year in productivity due to gridlock.

We badly need a plan to build and operate affordable public transit. We need leadership from this province and we need commitment to build public transit that serves this city. Instead, we hear increasing talk about privately funded transit, while TTC fares continue to go up and our services are cut.

We hear that there will be a new train to the airport, but instead of an affordable, green transit plan, the public will foot the bill to build a diesel train that will put the health of 300,000 Torontonians at risk. Instead of serving everyday people, this line will be affordable only to elite businessmen and bankers. We need this government to invest in green infrastructure and affordable public transit that serves everyone.

Young families in my riding are feeling particularly squeezed. Tuition fees, as my colleague mentioned, have skyrocketed under this government. Student debt and personal debt are at all-time highs. Parents of young families need affordable child care, and they need support to care for their aging parents as well. Life is increasingly precarious for many of our constituents. There is growing unemployment, and families are scrambling,

working multiple, often part-time jobs just to pay the bills.

I've heard clearly from families in Davenport that we must take action to support our seniors. Many of my constituents in Davenport are seniors who have given their lives to Ontario, who have worked hard, who have raised their families and contributed to our city and our neighbourhoods. And now many of them are left alone. Their children can no longer afford to live in our riding, and many are forced to move away to raise the next generation.

Seniors need respect from the provincial government. They need our help to make life more affordable. Seniors need pensions that pay the bills. They need the province to properly fund cities so that cities aren't forced to raise revenue from unfair property taxes that affect our senior citizens. It's simply not fair that corporations are receiving tax cuts while seniors on fixed incomes can't keep their heat on because they are forced to pay an unfair HST on home essentials.

We need to make sure that seniors get the home care and the long-term care they need so they can care for their spouses and they can stay in their homes. The government has proposed a home renovation tax credit for seniors to help them stay in their homes. We need to hear more about this and we need to look closely at the fine print. Will this program really provide seniors with the support that they so badly need, or is this just another feel-good promise that doesn't deliver? How many seniors will actually be able to access this program? How many seniors have \$10,000 to spend to renovate their home? Not many folks in my riding, I'll tell you.

People are sick of government speaking out of both sides of their mouth at once, whether it's talking about green jobs and then investing in dirty diesel trains, or expressing concerns for students after increasing tuition fees to record levels, or spending years on reports and reviews about poverty reduction while families struggle every day to pay the bills, or now this latest promise to help seniors after making life more expensive by insisting that they pay an unfair HST on their home essentials.

We need to make sure that the provincial government works for the people of Ontario and that we all work to make life more affordable for everyday Ontarians.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate my colleagues in this Legislature. Congratulations to all those re-elected. Although we may disagree on many things, I recognize and thank you for the sacrifice that all of you and your families make to public service in Ontario. To all the newly elected members of the Legislature, welcome to all of you. As the class of 2011, we have a lot of work to do and a lot to prove. And lastly, to my NDP team, thank you to our tireless leader Andrea Horwath. You are the right person for the job and it's an honour to work on your team.

To the veterans in my caucus: Thank you for your continuous support and encouragement.

To my staff and the caucus staff who work so hard every day here, who work such incredibly long hours



behind the scenes: We couldn't do this without you, so thank you.

To my new friends, the elected, the newly elected, the new New Democrats in caucus: I'm happy to know you, and I feel confident that we're up to the job.

These are very difficult times, but together we are a strong team with a powerful movement behind us. I wish all of us the very best of luck to work to deliver for the people of this province. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** It is an honour to be able to speak after listening to my two colleagues give their maiden speech.

I was just thinking, as I was listening, it seems like it was only yesterday when I walked up those stairs called Parliament. I have to tell you, there isn't a day when I walk into this building, as frustrated as I get in here sometimes—and we all do—that I don't still get that feeling of how special it is to be able to walk into this place called Parliament. It's like a dream come true.

I want to just make some short comments. First of all, to my colleague from London–Fanshawe: The most important thing you said—I heard it so loud and clear—is that you ride a motorcycle. Well, so do I, so this summer I expect that we'll be out somewhere together, riding around Queen's Park on our bikes, and that will be called “working together.”

To my good friend from Davenport: A couple of things you said just jumped right out at me. You mentioned the words “boys and girls club,” and right away, you hit it home, because those are the kinds of things that all of us support, and it was nice to hear you say that. The BIA: I sat on a number of BIAs as a city councillor in Niagara Falls, so I know the importance of those as well.

Finally, I just want to talk really quickly on the home renovation tax credit. I will tell you that during the debates I had, that was probably one of the most-asked questions of me by seniors, whether it was at the Ridgeway seniors' centre, the Niagara Falls Coronation seniors' centre, or the St. Davids Lions Club, and there was a real interest in that.

This is a great idea. The details will come out, and so I have shared those details. I've gone back into my riding of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie, and I have told the people clearly, “This is what you're going to get out of it.” I haven't had anyone come back to me and say, “It's terrible. I don't want it.”

You always want it to be better, and I acknowledge that. You want to be able to give everybody everything. That's what we all want to do, and we'd be flat broke. We can't, so you pick what you can do the best with.

In my riding, people are asking me for this to go ahead. I have a list of people who are expecting me to call them back when this is passed.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** It's really interesting this afternoon, as many new members have been giving their maiden speeches, just to hear from the member from London–Fanshawe and the member from Davenport. It's wonderful to see the passion and commitment that you're bringing to this place, and I'm sure that you're going to do wonderful things here. Congratulations, and all the best to both of you.

As we go forward, we are speaking about Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, which, of course, amends the Taxation Act, 2007.

I have to say, again, this is another disappointment. It's like so many of the bills that are being brought forward by this government: It's sort of half measures. Instead of really taking on the problem that we really need to deal with, we end with something that's so watered down and so diluted that it ends up with very little value.

It seems like it's really nothing much more than window dressing. Although it will help a few people, it's not taking on some of the really significant problems that we're faced with here in the province of Ontario, like the jobs crisis that we have here in the province.

We're now in the 59th straight month here in Ontario of having an unemployment rate that's higher than the national average. It's pretty shocking, considering that Ontario used to be the economic engine of Confederation. How far we've fallen.

We also have a major spending problem that this government really can't seem to get under control, which makes it all the more important, when we are doing some more spending, that we really target it and make it as broadly based as possible, to help as many people in the province of Ontario as we can.

There's no question that under this government, the plight of seniors has become worse and worse. There are a lot of people who are living in substandard housing conditions. Having this renovation tax credit is going to help a few people, yes, but how many people are really going to be able to afford \$10,000 in order to do the renovations for which they can get the 15% credit? So it's like we're trying to help a few people when we should be looking at spending the money as best we can and spreading it across to help as many Ontarians as we can, who are going through very difficult times right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1620

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'd like to extend my congratulations to my colleagues from London–Fanshawe and from Davenport for their first speech, their maiden speech, in this illustrious building, and I congratulate them for their sentiments.

Beginning first with my colleague from London–Fanshawe, she spoke on something that struck a chord with me when she talked about tuition increases. It's very interesting to note that it's this very same government, which is responsible for eight years of governing and



seeing tuition fees increase 30%, that's now proposing a grant to address that 30% increase in tuition. It's important to note that over the past eight years students have been crying out, and I attended a number of protests where we asked for a freeze in tuition fees, because adding a grant is a stopgap measure; it's a temporary solution. If tuition fees continue to increase, there is no real solution by giving a grant. A real solution is freezing tuition fees like they've done in Newfoundland, like they've done in other jurisdictions.

Turning to my colleague from Davenport, I commend the commitment to green energy. It's the direction where we should be heading towards. But in 2011, the fact that there is a proposal on the table for diesel trains, for trains which will pollute our environment in a time when we're moving towards more advanced technology—it's shameful that that's our solution; that in a time of more technology, advancing technology, our solution for transportation is to invest in brand new old-technology diesel trains. It simply defies logic. In this time and age we need to move towards green energy, and that means green transportation for the people of Davenport and for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** One last question and comment.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Before I begin my comments, I want to give a bit of a shout-out, if I can, Speaker, to John Ongaro back in Thunder Bay, at Magic 99.9 radio station. John's doing 34 consecutive hours, starting this morning at 6 o'clock, to raise the profile of the Christmas Cheer Fund in Thunder Bay. I had a chance to talk to John this morning before I flew down to Toronto. John, congratulations. Hopefully you helped the Christmas Cheer Fund meet their goal this year. They came up a little bit short last year.

This Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, of course, is a nice piece. I'm going to get to a few other examples in a minute, but just so that people know: 15% of up to \$10,000 in total eligible expenses; a maximum return of \$1,500 per year for seniors; a whole list of things here that are eligible, including handrails in corridors and wheelchair ramps. I was just at a constituent's home on Saturday morning, as a matter of fact, where they had to install a lift for this gentleman—for his wife. I'm sure they would have been very happy if they had been eligible for this program. Stairs, wheelchair lifts, elevators, bath lifts—the list goes on.

But this is, of course, not the only thing—far from it—that we've done for seniors since we've come to government: a property tax credit for seniors, allowing them up to \$1,025 annually; personal income tax cuts of 1% on the first \$37,000; a special energy credit for seniors in the north of up to \$200 for a family; an Ontario senior homeowner's property tax grant that we doubled, Speaker, for seniors—doubled up to \$500.

Speaker, I'll talk just briefly in the last 20 seconds of CEISS, the Centre of Excellence for Integrated Seniors' Services in Thunder Bay. We're building currently, right now, for seniors 132 new supportive housing units, as

well as a brand new long-term-care home, coming online soon: 350 to 450 new beds online starting next year.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** To reply, I recognize again the member for Davenport.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** You know, it's one thing to stand and talk about all the good things that have happened over eight years, but you know, when we go and canvass and we talk to constituents, people are not happy, and that's why people overwhelmingly voted for change in the last election.

I strongly believe that if we are going to increase voter turnout, we need to talk to our communities about what we can do as government.

As New Democrats, we believe that government has a role to play, that we need to play a leadership role in this province. If we're going to reduce poverty, government has a role to play; if we are going to create jobs, government has a role to play; and if we're going to create a green economy, the government has a role to play.

With all due respect, the member for Niagara Falls said we can't have everything, and I'm paraphrasing. We hear that all the time, and our constituents constantly hear that. They hear that their parents, senior citizens who have given an entire lifetime to this province, cannot have what they need to live with dignity as they age. They hear that their children cannot have good-quality, affordable child care. Torontonians are hearing every day that we can't afford to even keep our bus lines going because we can't pay to operate them. What I think Ontarians want to hear is what we can do as government, not what we can't do.

But one thing we do hear we can afford over and over again is we can always afford corporate tax cuts. I think this is absolutely the wrong way to go. We need to make sure that we're using our money wisely and that we're using every penny of it, respectfully, to support people, whether they are vulnerable, whether they're young or old, to make sure that we have the very best province that we can here in Ontario. That's going to inspire voters, and that's what's most important here, I think. So thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate on Bill 2?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to speak on Bill 2. This is another item in our helping seniors aging at home. In 2007, the McGuinty government launched the \$1.1-billion Aging at Home strategy, and that was a new direction for seniors. We had enough people in the long-term-care homes, we had enough of them in the urgent care beds in hospitals, and so many seniors want to stay at home.

I was at an event with the chair of the LHIN, Alex Munter, some time ago. There were 600 or 700 seniors in the room in Ottawa. Alex asked them, "How many of you want to end your days in a retirement home or a long-term-care home?" Of course, there was not one person who put up their hand.



The strategy of Aging at Home is designed to provide support for seniors and their caregivers, to help seniors stay healthy and live with dignity in the comfort of their own home much longer, and, for many of them, until the end of their days.

Ontario has invested \$540 million under the affordable housing program extension, which includes \$307 million in funding for rental units for low-income seniors. So there are programs for low-income earners as well. This is in addition to the energy and property tax credits for seniors that were mentioned often during this debate.

Personal income tax cuts, an average of \$200 annually for Ontarians, came in, and so this is of benefit to everyone.

The Ontario permanent tax credit provides annual payment for every senior in addition to the existing GST credit.

The Ontario senior homeowner property tax grant was doubled in 2010 to \$500. More than 600,000 seniors with low to middle incomes who own their own homes will receive this grant.

In addition, on energy bills the clean energy benefit takes 10% off their electricity bills.

So there are many, many programs that are helpful to people with middle and low incomes.

We've heard that Bill 2 only impacts a few people, but that's not so. This is a program that is available for many people. Many people wouldn't have the \$10,000 or \$15,000 immediately, but if they're looking at a program of 10 or 15 years of staying in their own homes and there is a series of improvements they can do on their homes, then this 15% tax credit is going to be worth it.

On that 15% tax credit, they've been saying, "Well, that's about equivalent to the tax, the GST and HST that you're paying on these improvements, that you pay the plumbers or you pay the material suppliers." But the fact is, unless you were going to be doing this under the table, you're going to be paying those taxes. That's part of all costs you have in Ontario. I think you have to recognize it is a 15% reduction in your costs.

1630

As with all plans, not all owners would take advantage of the tax. Based on the federal 2009 homeowner renovation tax credit, this program will be very popular. I took advantage of that. That was for a new home heating system. It was a great program. It incented me to replace my roof a couple of years earlier, because the program was on, and I also got the benefits of a much more energy-efficient heating system. That was the federal program. This one is to incent improvements to your home so that, as a senior, you can stay there much longer.

This costs the taxpayer a lot less money, and that's what is important. The cost of seniors going into urgent care beds when caregiving collapses and the ambulance is called—what has happened historically is that we've got too many people in urgent care beds in hospitals and in long-term care. This is not the place where seniors should be, and there haven't been the incentives before

the last two or three or four years, when aging at home became a priority for our government.

This is going to keep people in their homes. It's going to make it a lot better for taxpayers. I think the cost of an urgent care bed is \$1,200, \$1,300, \$1,400 a day; I'm not sure what it is in long-term care. But certainly the costs at home are just a fraction of that. This is an important incentive that not all seniors, of course, will be looking to, but there will be enough seniors, and the projections that have been made show that this is going to be significant.

If we can get more people staying at home, aging at home, having the facilities in their own homes that make their lives much easier—and these are support services for their health as well as for mobility in their homes—this will come together with what we're already doing.

The choice they have to make—being in my 70s, I start thinking of that as well. What happens if you need that lift? What happens if you need that walk-in tub? What happens if you need those 20 or 30 items that have been mentioned? It's certainly going to be of interest that you're going to be able to do that; look at a long term, 10 years of staying in your own home and being able to put those dollars in. If it's \$10,000, that's a huge amount of money, but when you consider the alternatives—going to a retirement home or other facility—it certainly makes it a lot easier.

Seniors, as we said before, certainly want to stay in their homes; there's no question. We as a government have to bring in all these issues. This is just one. This is not a silver bullet that's going to revolutionize the aging-at-home thing, but it's going to be part of all the advances we've already made. It will complement many of the aging-at-home investments that we have made and we are making.

We know that the federal program was very successful, as I said before. So incenting these renovations by having that 15% tax credit will add to the number of seniors who decide to make those renovations in their home. That's what it is. It's an incentive. It's not for all people, but it is targeted for seniors, it is going to help them and it is going to add to that list of items we've undertaken over the last few years and which we're going to continue.

Alex Munter was the head of the LHIN in Ottawa, and at the time he had started to move people out of urgent care beds in hospitals into their homes, where they had support services, or even into others. So that is another area that is continuing, that can be successful and that certainly has made a lot of progress in the last few years. I know it's the right direction to go. So this is an add-on that will help a lot of seniors make that decision to proceed.

Often with seniors we do not have sufficient contact with the health care system. That's changing, but in many cases we know that it was the people caring for the individual, for the senior, that would break down. They would call 911—an ambulance—and the senior would end up in the hospital, and that's where the big costs



would start. If that could be looked at, if we could do a lot of planning for this, which we can, this would help a lot in minimizing the number of people who end up in those emergency situations.

I know that I've spoken to a lot of the seniors' groups in Orleans. Two of them are francophone. We have the Rendez-vous des aînés, about 600 or 700 people; the Gloucester seniors group, 600 or 700 people; Séraphin-Marion, 600 or 700 people; and the Roy Hobbs group: over 2,000 seniors in my riding who are thinking about these things, and they have a lot of programs internally to keep in touch with their seniors, so they don't get into the same situation. They're good to be able to transfer the information. I think our Ontario government does support programs that help them with their physical activity and help them with better diets and better lifestyles as seniors, and keeping in touch.

Those programs are extremely important. When you have 2,000 people that this program is working with, you get a lot better connectivity with the people. But that's only for the club members. Outside of the club members—the 2,000 who are in the clubs—there are another 18,000 who don't have the benefits of that connectivity to their community. So we have a long way to go there.

This will support about \$800 million in home renovations activity. This is very significant. One of the criticisms I've heard is that the seniors do not have the resources to do this. Well, that's true about a lot of programs, but some of them do have the resources, and because it's long-term planning and interest rates aren't that high, the alternative to going into a retirement home—this starts to be very interesting. So the more we can promote aging at home, the more we can incent people to make those changes in their home so that they can save—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** It might not be a full \$10,000; they might only spend \$1,000 and get \$150 back.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** That's right; it's much better for them.

These improvements—they are in the \$10,000 range—can be made for home renovations. They will be available to seniors for many years, so we're talking \$1,000 a year if we are looking at 10 years, not \$10,000 in your back pocket that you're going to pull out, as has been suggested by some of the members. This is planning ahead. It's an incentive, and it certainly is going to work.

Few people pay cash for their home improvements that they make otherwise, so this may be an expenditure the same way. So seniors will look at their options, which include residential retirement homes—these are expensive—or staying in their own homes, where these modifications will make the difference. It will make the difference in them being able to stay with their neighbours, live in the same community they have and have those supports. Part of the supports will be the medical supports through the resource centres and through the government programs, and so the matching of these two supports will certainly make it better for seniors. They will finance the improvement, pay over 10 or 15 years,

and this will be the way they'll look at the project. I'm sure that's the way they look at most home modification projects, whether it's seniors or other owners.

One of the issues, I think, as well, that we have to talk about is, with the large number of seniors and the demographic changes that we're seeing in our communities, we'll have to start looking at seniors helping seniors more. I think it's something that I've spoken about to all three or four organizations that I mentioned earlier. I think we're going to have to do that. The number of seniors who are going to be in trouble is such that we have to get seniors helping seniors. A lot of these clubs basically start getting members when they're 55 years old. And they want to work; they want to do community work.

I think of the old part-time firemen as an equivalent that we could look at, where there are some little dollars that they get. The firemen used to get a little bit, a few dollars every Christmas for their volunteer work during the year. We have to look at that because we're not going to be able to provide all those systems like Meals on Wheels and driving the seniors to the bank—all those other issues. So seniors helping seniors has to be a part of the strategy as we move forward.

The Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre in Orleans is working with seniors and seniors, organizations to complement all the services they have, and they're moving ahead. They have designed plans that are being implemented on a weekly and monthly basis. They're changing the way they deal with seniors. They know that if they can keep the seniors in their home and keep them there well, it's saving all the taxpayers so much money.

#### 1640

So this is an important program that will work for many seniors—certainly not all seniors, but it's going to be an important part of the package that we have. We have to come up with new ways of dealing with this larger and larger group of our people.

There are programs that help the lower end of the income bracket with these same modifications to their homes if they don't have the funds. They are getting the railings in their bathrooms, the walk-in bathrooms, the lifts etc. This will let the people that are able to pay for it do it on their own, to prepare their homes and make that decision to plan ahead and look at what they need and get it in place so that they're fine.

I talked about the many seniors' groups in our community. I know that any of the discussions I've had over this new bill have been positive, I would think partly because the members of the seniors' clubs are the ones I meet more often and they are the ones that are still self-sufficient and want to continue to be self-sufficient and are moving ahead.

The 15% tax credit has been criticized as only 2% more than the taxes that you pay for your contractors, for your materials, but 15% is huge. And it was huge in the federal program that got so many renovations done to homes.



You have to keep your paperwork on it. I put the tax credit on my income tax, and sure enough, they wanted to do an audit on me. They did, and they found that, yes, the paperwork was in place. That's an inconvenience, but it wasn't that difficult to get on my tax return. It wasn't that difficult to show the tax department that I'd actually expended that money.

So the home energy retrofits are much the same for seniors, the amount we could get into, like a lot of the energy efficiency solutions that we have—air-sealing, insulation, doors and windows, and more efficient heating systems. This would be great to go towards that in the future, because this is all good stuff. I think most of the home energy retrofit work that I did, the repayment—if you paid it all yourself, repayment is under 10 years.

Seniors are a growing demographic in Ottawa, as elsewhere. We must strive to do all we can to keep the services out of long-term care, out of our hospitals, and more in our homes. We must get volunteers involved in that. The healthy seniors' community can do a lot of work to help us there.

So I'm going to continue the discussions with the seniors' groups at home. It's 2,000 out of 20,000 seniors in my riding. I am going to continue the discussions with them to get them more involved with seniors. They're involved with their own members now, but if we could expand that outwards, it would really—a lot of these 55-year-olds are energetic, they're ready to go, they're ready to do great things, so I think the seniors' clubs are taking that leadership.

The CCACs are there with the resource centres to help these seniors' clubs do that, and we have to find more ways to help our seniors.

So as a government and a province, we are moving ahead in helping seniors age where they want to: at home, in their neighbourhoods. We can extend the time seniors can stay at home.

This bill, the healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, will make more homes easier for seniors to live in and make their lives better. This is not the answer for all seniors, but it adds to the long list of actions we have taken as a government to make aging at home a better solution. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Speaker. I've had the opportunity to listen to the member opposite with regards to Bill 2. I have also had an opportunity to scan briefly the Auditor General's report released today. It outlines the fact that Ontarians are paying more for hydro, they're paying much more for car insurance, and even more importantly, they're paying much more for booze. So again, accompanied with the fact that Ontario families, especially seniors, are struggling to make ends meet and get ahead, the Ontario way, as Dalton McGuinty refers to it, involves paying more and getting less on everything from health services to electricity prices and, yes, even education.

In fact, this bill tries to copy the successful federal Conservative home renovation tax credit, as the member

opposite just recently mentioned, with one catch, though. This Liberal bill does not benefit every homeowner. During the election, our party talked about providing that real relief for Ontario families and seniors by taking the HST off of home heating and hydro. I go back to Bill from Elmira, who, during the election, was shaking, his hydro bill in his hand, afraid to open it, saying, "Listen, I can barely afford to live in my own home with these rising electricity prices," these contracts that we're paying exorbitant amounts for. It's 80 cents per kilowatt hour when the market rate is far, far less.

Again, the simple fact today is that Ontario seniors just simply don't have \$8,500 lying around for these so-called luxury renovations. In addition to that, given the estimated cost, the government would have done better to help all families, as the federal Conservative government had done, by implementing a program that would be available for everybody, or by adopting our bill, as I go back before to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, the HST off of home heating and hydro, supported by the Ontario PC caucus.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I had the opportunity to listen very carefully to the member opposite from Ottawa-Orléans, and particularly with respect to some of the comments regarding the seniors' tax credit and its benefit to seniors.

My concern is that when we look at the proposal, it's very limited in scope. If we truly want to help seniors, if we really want to improve their condition, let's make this tax credit more comprehensive. What are some of the other concerns that seniors face? What about the fact that seniors need to be concerned about their health and may have certain dietary needs? Let's extend the tax credit to their food, to their nutrition. How about addressing the fact that seniors have transportation difficulties? Let's address the fact that seniors should have a tax credit for their travel, for their transit perhaps.

Why is this tax credit so limited in its scope just for mobility? How can we expect seniors to spend \$10,000 on renovations strictly regarding mobility concerns? What about concerns related to efficiencies in their homes? What about concerns related to other necessities in seniors' lives?

Let's expand this tax credit. Make it more comprehensive so we can truly care for seniors and truly address their needs beyond the limited scope of mobility.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to congratulate my colleague Mr. McNeely, the member from Ottawa-Orléans, for a great speech, his 20-minuter; it was very good.

As he articulated very clearly, this seniors-focused credit that we are discussing here today is only one of a series of tax credits that are seniors-focused, only one of a series of tax grants that are seniors-focused that we have brought in to make life much more affordable for



seniors in the province of Ontario over the last number of years.

I would say that it stands in stark contrast to what many of us saw before we came to this place in 2003, when we all witnessed the biggest tax shift in the history of the province of Ontario when the former government, the PC government, downloaded a whole host of provincial government services into the residential property tax base, which very disproportionately affected seniors in ridings in every city right across the province of Ontario.

More to the point and what it is that this credit—it's only one of a series of credits and grants that we've introduced over the last number of years. The focus is keeping seniors in their homes. They want to be there. They want to be able to afford to live there. And with, as all of us in this Legislature know and understand, health care costs ballooning incredibly with an aging population, with dementia increasing, with diabetes issues increasing, with the baby boomers just turning 65, we know that the most expensive place for them to provide care is in a long-term-care home or in a seniors' home. So part of the focus here on the macro level is to do one more thing in a series of issues, credits and grants that we've introduced to try and help seniors to stay in their homes longer, which is where they want to stay.

As I said in my earlier two-minuter, in Thunder Bay—Atikokan, my riding, we have the Centre of Excellence for Integrated Seniors' Services. We're currently building 132 brand new supportive housing units, as well as a brand new long-term-care home to address the longer-term needs. The focus here is to help them stay in their home.

1650

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to advise that I'm going to share my time with my esteemed colleague—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No, just a two-minute response.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Sorry. My apologies, Speaker. I'm a little ahead of my agenda.

This bill just doesn't make sense in any way, shape or form. My colleague from Thunder Bay: I appreciate what you're saying, but it just doesn't get there. It doesn't serve the seniors, and we need to quit rewinding the clock back 10 and 15 years. I only want to look at today and going forward, what we're going to do to help people, not what they could have or should have done.

We need to definitely focus on helping all seniors. We can't make this a "have-not" and "have" seniors debate. We need to ensure that things that we're going to do for our seniors truly actually help them. People, as my esteemed colleague from Kitchener—Waterloo said, were shaking at the doorstep, wondering how they were going to pay their hydro bills. They weren't talking about putting a handrail in their bathtub. That was the least of their concern. Is it a nice idea? Sure it is, but it's not going to make or break their life, if they don't have the ability to stay warm in their home.

We need to ensure that what we're doing is going to benefit all of the people and it's not going to take money out of their pockets at all costs. Most of the seniors in my riding couldn't imagine having \$10,000 and they don't have a Samsung friend that they can go and ask for that loan from. My colleague from Orléans was suggesting they go and get a loan. Well, my mom is 84 years old. I don't think she's going to take out a 10- or 15-year loan to get a \$200 tax credit after the HST is charged and they put the HST on and give her that \$200 credit.

So, Speaker, we just have to fess up here and say that this is not anything that's going to help all seniors. If they really want to owe it to the seniors like one of colleagues across the floor suggested, they need to just repeal this whole thing and they need to do things that are going to work, such as our Green Energy Act that we've tried to suggest that will keep the energy costs for all seniors down. It will help every senior in every home across Ontario, particularly those in the rural areas that only have certain sources of heat. Speaker, I ask the other side to reconsider and give this back, and take this bill and put it back.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Ottawa—Orléans has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I want to thank the members for Kitchener—Conestoga, Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Thunder Bay—Atikokan—my sidekick here—and the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for their comments on Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act.

I think what has come out in the many hours of debate we've had on this bill was the intent of the bill. It's another way of helping seniors—not all seniors, of course, but helping seniors to stay in their homes, to age in their homes. We have to look at all the many, many ways that this government, over the last few years, has done that, like the \$1.1-billion Aging at Home from 2007, I believe, which was the first major undertaking to stop the number of seniors who were going to long-term-care homes prematurely.

This whole issue is very much in the health groups' mind now. I know that for the LHIN in Ottawa, one of the major undertakings is to get the number of beds that are occupied by seniors who should be in alternative care down. They're working on that. Just to continue building more long-term-care beds is not the answer. We know that's the most expensive way for our seniors. Most of them want to live in their own homes. Most of them want that connection to their community. So this is just one more of the ways that our government is moving ahead with a program that has been tested with the federal renovation. We know that we're going to get a lot of uptake on it. There are going to be a lot more seniors who are going to be able to age at home. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion



for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Madam Speaker, we wish the debate to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate? The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker. I am pleased to extend this debate and share my thoughts with you. I would like to advise, though, that my esteemed colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Jeff Yurek, is going to share my time.

Speaker, my concern with this Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit bill is that it discriminates between the haves and the have-nots. This bill caters only to a small percentage of seniors, seniors who are well off financially. They're property owners with a higher-than-average income level, thanks to their private investment and pension funds, and I would suggest that they will do these renovations regardless of any kind of a tax credit given to them. This bill does not, however, provide any meaningful financial assistance for your average senior in Ontario today, because it assumes—and wrongly so, Speaker—that seniors have an extra \$10,000 lying around for upfront costs. This is just not so. The fact is, an average senior in Ontario today is getting by on about \$17,000 a year. So if you were to take that \$10,000 up front, that's over 50% of their income for the year. The fact is, they can't get the \$10,000 even if they tried—and I go back to my comment again—unless they can go to their friends at Samsung and another sweetheart subsidy. Therefore, your tax credit, although well-intentioned, is leaving a lot of seniors out in the cold, or, perhaps more accurately, inside their homes in the cold.

My colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek earlier suggested there was a shell game going on: You take your \$1,500 tax credit; however, there's going to be \$1,300 in HST, so you're basically going to get around a \$200 net. It's just playing games with numbers. A wise senior—a senior, I mention—once suggested to me that liars never figure and figures never lie. Similar to jail closings, you're stealing from Peter to pay Paul. What I would like is for the government to truly respect the ability for Ontario taxpayers to pay the freight on their ill-conceived boondoggles.

Even though I think this bill has some potential, it's a long way from helping the have-not seniors, a number of whom live in my riding, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. Grey-Bruce has a considerably higher average of senior citizens than the province overall. In Grey county, one in five people are over 65 years of age, people who are going to require home heating every day of this hard, cold winter, and most of them depend on government funds and subsidies to get by in some way, shape or form. They are not going to have \$10,000 to install these types of improvements, supposedly, in their homes. They're housed in nursing homes, one of 31 homes in Grey county, or one of 870 public housing units.

My riding, in essence, represents your average senior. They're struggling to pay their bills, like home heating

and electricity bills. They're struggling to put food on the table. They're struggling to find access to transportation, which is almost nonexistent in rural Ontario—public transportation, that is—and they're struggling to live in dignity.

And \$1.8 billion paid to our neighbours to the south through the subsidies because we have too much energy currently—we're paying them. Somebody said earlier today that we are selling. I would like to suggest that that's not the case. We're actually paying them to take our power, which is making them doubly successful against our own manufacturers here in Ontario. Just horrible.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It's \$1.8 billion?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's \$1.8 billion; yes, sir.

They just don't have the \$10,000 prerequisite that's required under your bill.

My colleague from Willowdale suggested that the government has two priorities: one is addressing the needs of seniors; and the other, strengthening the economy. He suggested that they listen to the economists. I'd like to know again how much that cost. I'm sure the consulting fees are worth more than this bill, probably, by the time it's all said and done.

I listened, on the other hand, to the taxpayers when I was going door to door. They were telling me that they're worried about paying their bills, predominantly their heating and hydro bills, and about staying in their homes. They're concerned. You said that you owe it to seniors. Well, I would suggest that playing shell games and discriminating between haves and have-nots is not helping our seniors.

If you really want to help our seniors, then give them a break on their home heating and hydro bills. With rising heating costs, many seniors will struggle to pay their heat this winter. We know that first-hand. My colleagues across our caucus have talked to people in their ridings, and they're all concerned. If you really want to give them stability, comfort and safety and ease concerns over finances, and perhaps alleviate other problems such as stress-related health issues, I ask you: Remove the HST off their heating and home hydro bills. If you want to fight senior poverty, stop hitting them with the extra taxes and surcharges on their hydro bills.

If you look at their demographic, you'll find that the most punished are senior women. Almost half—41.5%—of single, widowed or divorced women over 65 are poor. How is this bill going to ever help those people? How many people in this group will receive help from this initiative and your government? They just don't have \$10,000 extra kicking around to do these types of repairs.

1700

In response to the statement by the colleague from Peterborough about an aging parent, I want to tell you a story about my mom, Jean. She worked very hard and raised my five brothers and sisters and I. She survives without a pension and lives very frugally—and without complaint, I might add. She believes in paying her way and does not want a handout.



I can just hear it now: "Hey, Mom, I'm thinking: Do you have 10,000 bucks to install lever handles in your palatial home? I can get you a \$200 credit for that, net." This is key: It's net. It's not the big \$1,500 they're talking about. The net is \$200. "Don't touch the thermostat, but you'll be able to get out of this freeze-box, because we've put better handles on the doors." I can hear her reply now, Speaker, and it is not, "Where do I sign up?"

My colleague from Ottawa-Orléans talked about a loan. She's 84 years old. She's not taking out a 10- or 15-year loan when she can't afford to stay in her home or when she's afraid to turn up the thermostat to stay warm. Is this the dignity we're showing our seniors? Is this the way we want to treat those people who have paved the way for us to enjoy what we have today? I think not.

Similar to many of the schemes the minority Liberals bring to this House, this bill will require significant amendments—amendments that would actually help seniors, particularly those seniors in need—prior to receiving my full support. With the current economic situation, this government will have to do better than a \$1,500 tax credit to prevent more seniors from slipping into poverty.

It's like most of the schemes I've seen so far in my short tenure in this House: long on promise. One of my colleagues suggested earlier that if you drive by at 60 miles an hour, it looks really good. But when you get close and really start to read the detail, you really start to look at what it's going to do for people at the end of the day, there's no substance.

It's just yet another broken promise, another veiled broken promise: "We will help you. We will be there. We are the people to save you." But what will you really do? Can you look those seniors in the eye when you're done and say, "We really have come to your defence and your aid"? I think not.

This marginalized group that's at the tipping point could tell you there are better ways to spend the \$60 million allocated for this tax break. Many seniors in small towns like where I come from—Durham, Dundalk, Wiarton and Tobermory in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound—are worried about hydro and heating costs. This bill will do nothing to address the concerns of those people who are eking out from day to day, wondering, "Will I turn up the thermostat, will I throw another sweater on or will I put another handrail beside my bathtub?" It's just ludicrous. We need to do more for our people.

I'm worried that this bill sends the wrong message to the seniors who desperately need our help. We need to be reaching out and putting legislation in place that truly every senior can tap into, not those seniors with wealth and affluence who own their own home and have the ability to perhaps come up with \$10,000. I would suggest to you that there are even lots of people with that ability who will not pony up \$10,000 to get a purported \$1,500 tax credit. As we say, when we've done the math shell game that the Liberals are great at doing, they get \$200 at

the end of the day. The numbers just don't add up, if you really take time to look at it.

So, ladies and gentlemen, let's get our priorities straight. Helping those in need to keep their lights on and stay warm is not frivolous spending. It is basic human decency.

We need to ensure that we do things that are truly going to touch those most in need. Many of the seniors in my area, as I mentioned before, live on fixed incomes, on fixed pensions. They do not have the ability to absorb HST, and then, on top of all those costs, come up and pony to the trough with \$10,000. Many of those people across the lobby may have the ability to do that, and maybe they have taxpayers who are suggesting that they will do it on their behalf. But in my riding, I can tell you, this just is not so.

This is an absolute discredit to the seniors who need help in our province. We need to ensure that we give them the most ability to do things that are going to let them live in a safe environment, in a healthy environment.

We need to ensure that they're going to have the ability to pay those bills when they come in. As mentioned earlier, my mother lives on a very, very limited income. The last thing she would want is not to be able to pay her bill. The last thing I want for my mom is for her to be looking at a thermostat on the wall and saying, "No, I just can't go there, I just don't have the money," because it would be dishonourable for her not to be able to pay her bill, not to be able to pay her own way, at the end of the day.

We need to all ensure that we're thinking of those in our society in those circumstances, not those that have the ability to spend \$10,000 to get, again, the supposed, purported \$1,500 tax break.

Speaker, I really, really ask the government to rethink this bill. There needs to be significant amendments. It needs to be more like our federal cousins, who actually put a bill in place that will benefit everyone across Ontario; that any homeowner who needs help and who needs to be able to do these types of things can do it.

Certainly things like ramps—that's honourable, that's a good thing, and some people may need to do that. We need to ensure that we have those programs for those people—like a wheelchair ramp, absolutely, a lift to get them up into their second-storey home. But I'll tell you, Speaker, I think those people that are in two-storey homes right now on very fixed incomes are probably looking at the reality, saying, "I'm going to sell this home. I can't afford to keep my beautiful, long-time"—centuries, in many cases—"home," because they can't afford to pay the hydro and heating bills.

Speaker, we need to ensure that when the government brings things to the table, they're well thought out. We need to ensure there's a plan. We need to ensure that we've actually looked beyond the headline in the paper, the attention-grabbing headline that's only going to grab a little bit of a sound byte, and those seniors that come back to me, saying, "Mr. Walker, how is this going to



help me? How am I going to really be able to do this? How am I going to get any of these things that are supposedly assistance for me if I don't have any money to pay the most basic of my necessities, my heating and hydro bill, in a Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound winter?"

Madam Speaker, without a shadow of a doubt, Wiarton Willie is going to predict that we're going to have six long weeks of winter on February 2, or an early spring; I know that for certain. But I can tell you that those seniors that are going to be listening to that predication will have frozen for two or three or six weeks before that, Speaker, because they couldn't afford to do that. They don't have the ability to get a \$1,500 tax credit to perhaps put towards their heating and hydro bill, which is very costly. They just don't have the resources to pony up to the trough.

It's all ill thought out. In fact, I'm not certain there was any thought put into it whatsoever. I think they just tried to grab something from our federal cousins that they know worked, and then they tried to play it down and throw a bunch of numbers in to try to confuse people in the shell game. Speaker, it just will not happen. They're not going to pull the wool over my constituents' eyes, or, Speaker, I don't believe those of my colleagues here as well.

I reach out to my colleagues on all sides of this floor to say that this bill is not something that's going to help seniors. This is definitely a bill that's going to only help those that are already relatively affluent. I myself don't have \$10,000 to throw out, and I wish I could for my mom, but I don't even have that. So is the message there to go and borrow more money? That seems to be the Liberal mantra: Let's borrow more and spend more. But at the end of the day, Speaker, someone has to pay these bills.

We are a party that is looking at that. We're going to put in a public sector wage freeze. We're going to put more jobs in through apprenticeship programs so that we can actually help get our economy going and get our taxes down to where they're bearable. We cannot afford to keep going on a \$16-billion deficit and giving \$60 million to people that already are affluent and have \$10,000 in their back pocket.

Speaker, we need to ensure that we're doing things that help those most vulnerable in our society. We do not need to give handouts; we need to give a hand up. We need to help those people who are less fortunate and deserve our true support, not these veiled thought processes where we're just going to throw money at them and consider that they're all going to run to the trough with their chequebook in hand. Because you know what, folks? A whole bunch of people in Ontario spoke up in this election and said, "We don't have that chequebook. We don't have that ability to just sign your next promise down the road."

We need to ensure, Speaker, that things like the Mississauga gas plant actually get finished—and we really, at this point, don't even care where. We just wish they'd build it so that it could actually start producing

electricity, so that people can actually have the ability to have that when they need it.

Speaker, we've wasted millions and millions, and some would suggest billions, of dollars on a boondoggle there. We had an eHealth boondoggle, and yet we don't have the decency to come back to our seniors and give to it everyone; not just the haves, but the have-nots, those people that need the money most.

Speaker, I have to keep coming back to this. It's just laughable in some cases that we play number games—a \$1,500 tax credit, if you pony up \$10,000. And if you pay the \$1,300 HST, then you're going to have a whopping \$200. Well, isn't that fabulous, Speaker? My mom will be just raving, and I'm sure she's got her pen in her hand at home when I get there to sign up on the application form, Speaker.

We need to do more. We need to ensure that we reach out to those people that actually have to make decisions, and I'm trusting that most of my colleagues, unfortunately, across the floor, have never been in that position. I came from very modest beginnings, and I can tell you that's the life I lived. You go day to day and you ensure that you have the basic, core essentials. Heating and hydro is an essential; putting a little handrail in a bathtub, while it may help some, is not an essential when it comes to: "Do I turn up the heating thermostat tonight when it's going to be minus 10, minus 15, minus 20 or"—for my northern friends—"minus 40?" It's just not credible.

1710

We need to ensure that what we're going to do is put more money in programs that are actually going to help us, not take the \$60 million and get the big headline. That's a pretty expensive sound bite, Speaker. We're talking to the media when we do these things: "We're going to help our seniors. We owe it to our seniors. We care about our seniors." Speaker, if they truly cared about the seniors, they would make this open to any and every senior across this great province of Ontario.

We need to ensure that we actually fight senior poverty. There are so many seniors in our midst who are struggling to pay the bills, to turn up the heat, to actually put food on the table in front of them, and they're just clinging with their fingernails to hold on to that home that they so dearly want to stay in for the last, potentially, years of their life.

We need to ensure that we put programs in place that will help them, not hit them with an extra tax, an extra surcharge—oh, I go back: "We will not tax anymore." I think there was a health tax thrown in. "We will not tax anymore." I think there was an eco tax thrown in there. Now I think we're actually thinking about a carbon tax; that's the last one that I've heard. It's just a matter of time, I'm sure, until that one comes to the table.

We need to ensure that these schemes—and they truly are schemes; they're a shell game scheme. A number of my colleagues have utilized that term today, and I think it fits. It's one of those situations where we certainly are just moving money from Peter to pay Paul. It's like the jails. We're going to move a jail, and we're going to save



money because we can put them in the big house in Penetang, but we're not going to actually take a look at what the net saving to the province of Ontario is.

We need to ensure there are net savings when we do these initiatives, Speaker. We need to ensure that the people of Hanover, the people of Durham, the people of Tobermory, the people of Sauble Beach, the people of Allenford can actually afford to have their heat put on and not worry about, "Can I call some home renovator and get a bar put on my bathtub?" Is it an admirable thing? Absolutely, if we weren't in a \$16-billion deficit situation.

We need to do things that are actually going to make a difference; we need to make hard choices and put programs in place that are actually going to make a difference in people's everyday lives. We need to give them the ability to pay their bills. We need the ability for them to not only want to turn up the heat, but to actually have the ability to turn up the heat. And, Speaker, in this House, we're going to continue to turn up the heat on the government opposite, because they are not doing the things that are actually standing up for the people of Ontario and, particularly, rural and northern Ontario.

We need to do more, not less. We need to ensure that we're putting programs in place that are actually going to give these people some little glimmer of hope, that people actually care, that people actually come to Queen's Park every day to do things for the benefit of them.

I do give my colleagues across the aisle the benefit of the doubt. But I'll tell you, Speaker, when they come with these types of schemes, these types of shell games, it just discredits all of them. It's unfortunate, because I think there are a number of great people across the aisle who I have started to get to know and was able to have some conversations with. But it disheartens me to see this type of thing go on time and again in this House every day.

We talk and we talk and we talk about rhetoric. "We're going to save and we're going to give them \$1,500 tax credits." We're not going to give them anything because it's their money we're giving them. We need to stop buying them with their own money. We need to do the right thing. We need to ensure that what they're going to do is be able to get actual programs and services that support them and serve them.

They're not the people who should have to be paying through the nose every time we turn around because our friends on the other side come up with another scheme yet again to say, "We are going to save you. We are going to give you \$1,500 of your own money." It sounds like that energy thing from about a year ago: "We're going to up your rates 46%, and we're going to buy you back with a 10% rebate." Well, come on, people; they're too smart for that. We know and you know that that was just a scheme again.

This is like, going back again, Speaker—and I just can't get past this until they actually tell us what's going to happen with this Mississauga gas plant. If they would

have just actually built it or not built it, or build it—but not all of them. We just can't keep flipping and flopping back and forth. Then these folks, these seniors who we supposedly care so much about, would be in a situation where they could actually have the money to pay the bills. They're all people who care. They come from a generation that values hard work, determination, paying my bills, paying my way. They're not looking for a handout; they just simply want to be able to live their life within their means, something that maybe you folks could take as a little bit of a thought process: Live within your means. Don't put the debt on the backs of my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren.

Folks, we need to start doing the right thing. We need to ensure that we do things not like this tax credit, that we do things to help people. Speaker, we need to ensure we do that, and less rhetoric. Action, not rhetoric.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for London—Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** First, I want to congratulate the member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound on his very passionate speech today. Congratulations on that. He made some very poignant points; I think the overall theme of his was affordability.

One thing he said was that seniors on average make \$17,000 a year. I think that's probably a little on the high side. A lot of the seniors whom I have met, you know, their pension plans weren't there. They were making maybe less than \$1,000 a month for their pensions. When you take that into account, the affordability issues that we're talking about—and I'm going to average \$1,000 because that's what I've seen. For people who are working and seniors with pension plans, they have to pay their property tax, insurance costs, heating, gas in their car, food, and possibly medication that isn't covered. Then to add on an additional \$10,000 if you want to stay in your home, to put a ramp in—those seniors do not have that kind of money. Most seniors aren't willing to go to the bank and mortgage their homes, because my generation, my parents, they paid cash for everything. They don't want to mortgage their homes to stay in their homes.

We need to find a better way to make life more affordable for seniors, and one of them is taking the HST off home heating, a great first step to show all seniors that we care and we want to help them with their affordability issues. It's not just about some seniors; it's about all seniors. We have to really step back and try to help all seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** First, let me welcome the member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Mr. Walker, to the House here. I hope that, given some time, he will avail himself of the various programs that seniors are enjoying today thanks to the Liberal government, which, over the last few years, has brought them in for the benefit of all seniors and not a particular slice of the seniors.

We must not forget, Madam Speaker, that I hope that the members of the House will indeed allow this bill to



move on through past second reading so we can go to some committee level and hear what people have to say. But for the benefit of the House and the new members, there hasn't been a government that has brought in more programs for the benefit of all seniors than this particular government that we have today. Let me add to this, Madam Speaker: Not every program that any particular government brings about must be used or enjoyed by every particular senior.

Let me remember to the member that lately, very lately, they voted against a budget which lowered personal income tax for some 90,000 people, including seniors—low-income seniors; they voted against it. We have another benefit for seniors, Madam Speaker, which they are availing themselves of. We have a tax credit, \$650 for seniors. This one here will be used for people who can and want to avail themselves.

I hope that we can move this ahead for second reading and to our committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened quite attentively to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I compliment the member; it's refreshing to hear the passion that he was sent here to deliver. It was a wake-up call. I could tell the members on the government side were disturbed and attentive because he was striking a nerve. He was touching at the very essence of why he was elected and why you lost 30-some members. There's no question: He brings a passion to the job that is essential—and he's a duly adequate replacement for Bill Murdoch, the person that brought reality right to this Legislature.

1720

He mentioned a few things. I think it's important to reflect for a moment on his background. He talked a bit about the implications on Bill 4, the HST bill, and energy prices. I'm just going to look at the bill itself here. Now, what is excluded here is quite telling. It says what expenses would not be eligible, and here's an example: roof repairs, insulation of heating or air conditioning.

Well, you're talking about comfort for seniors. You're charging more HST. We know that, according to the auditor today, the price of energy is going up at some 8% per year, plus it's already gone up 40%. It appears to me that this false tax credit here, you've got to spend \$10,000—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** On a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** —this shell of a tax credit.

This tax credit, you have to spend \$10,000. On the \$10,000 there's going to be \$1,300 in taxes, and you get a credit of \$1,500. So it's nothing but a tax grab on seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Davenport.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Thank you, Speaker. I think it's very important that we're having this debate here. Obviously, we have a population that's getting older and we

have a real challenge about supporting them. I think that throughout this Legislature, all of us are committed to making sure that our parents and our grandparents have the supports they need, that they live with dignity and respect.

But, you know, I was happy to hear the words of our colleague from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. He was putting the progressive back in Progressive Conservatism, I think, when he was talking about making sure that we provide services, that we collect taxes to pay for services that actually make the society we live in more equitable. I think when we look back throughout history, things that we created like public health care, like public education, these things affect all folks in a way that makes society more equal. If we were to look back on history, were this bill to go through the way it is now, this is not one of those bills—and you laid it out very clearly. Who is going to be able to access this benefit? Only the wealthiest people in Davenport. The wealthiest people in Ontario will be able to get the support they need, and it is going to leave thousands and thousands—and I would say most seniors are going to be left behind without any capacity to pay for this. So they are not going to benefit from this. When we look back in history this will not be something that made Ontario fairer, and I think we need to look at it through this lens.

We do need to invest in supporting our seniors. I was a little bit alarmed to hear the member from Ottawa-Orléans talking about volunteerism as the solution here.

**Interjection:** Way to go, volunteers.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Volunteerism—we have to applaud volunteers in Ontario, but we are here to make sure that we put programs in place so that people get the best quality of service available. It means that we have to pay home care workers the salaries that they need to do their jobs, make sure that they have the credentials that they need and make sure that seniors and the growing senior community in this province have the kind of care that they deserve. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you very much to my colleagues for speaking. It's heart-warming to hear other people on the same page, because at the end of the day, I came to Queen's Park to be able to make a difference for the people in my community, and this one is definitely one where, if we do it right, we can help people across not only my great area of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, but all of your magnificent ridings as well. I just think we have to step backwards and put some sound reason into who this is really serving: the people, the seniors who you talk about across Ontario, or a headline in the paper for you in a partisan way? We just can't go down these tracks, Speaker, and play shell games anymore.

You've run us \$16 billion in deficit. We cannot continue these schemes, these shell games. They're going to take money away from the very people who you're purporting to give it back to. We've had it too many



times. We need to ensure that we do not leave our seniors behind. Those people built this great country. They went before us and paved the way to ensure that we had good services, good programs and, for goodness' sakes, the ability to turn the heat on in the middle of the wintertime. The last thing we need to do is to put a draconian bill like this, that is only going to reward those who have the affluence and ability to find \$10,000.

We're not going to run this on volunteers. We're not going to go out—I'm certainly not taking my mom to the bank to get a loan at 84 years of age to put some handicap bars in her home. It's just not reality, Speaker, and I think it concerns me more that we're even thinking of doing those types of things as opposed to actually putting the bill in place.

You're just on the wrong track. You're not listening to the people. We did. We got here as a minority government because we listened to the people who said, "We've had enough. We can't afford our heat and hydro. We can't afford to turn the thermostat up. We need relief." We listened to the people, particularly in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and rural areas, and we're here today because of it. Speaker, we need to repeal this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's unfortunate that I only have 10 minutes, because I have so much to say on this bill. And I say this with a great deal of regret. I do. I have to rush through all my points, and I don't like rushing. I'll tell you why I don't like rushing: because I really respect the simultaneous interpreters in there. Do you see them there labouring behind those windows?

*Applause.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I've got to tell you, what they do is incredibly difficult. I speak French; I'm proud of the French I speak. I speak Italian, and I speak Spanish. But what they do is incredible. I could never do the kinds of things that they're able to do. When I hear the member from Bruce-Owen Sound speak at the pace at which he was speaking, I wonder to myself, "How the heck do they manage to interpret or translate at that speed?" God bless you. You're doing a great job.

I mean to speak to the Speaker about the complexity of the translations, because when people have written speeches, and they speak that fast, we should do them the courtesy of sending them the speech so they would have the benefit of looking at it and hopefully be able to translate as quickly as people are speaking. I mean to speak to the Speaker about that just to help them out. I will get that opportunity.

Second, I worry because this is the second time in a row I'm beginning to agree with the Tories. You get nervous, you really do, because people out there are thinking, "What's going on?" I get worried about that, I have to admit. When you talk about Conservative prescriptions for how we deal with issues of revenue, we are miles and miles and kilometres apart—we are. Tories like to always do better than the Liberals, although the Liberals are Tories in a hurry on this one. They want to cut

corporate taxes as much as they can—Tories can never get enough—and that's their prescription for solving unemployment issues. God bless them. On that one, we are miles apart. Now, they're not too far from the Liberals on that one, but I just wanted to say that I agree with Tories on this very issue of Bill 2—profound disagreement about the prescription around how we solve economic issues. I wanted to tell you that.

The other thing the Tories like that I profoundly disagree with is the whole idea of firing workers. Liberals are not too far behind you guys, because they've already laid off—how many have you laid off? A couple hundred or 500 or so already? And they're on the way to firing a lot more? They say this with a great deal of pride, so they're right behind you on that one. I've got to tell you I disagree with both of you on that one, so I don't know how close you want to be with them on that one. They want to fire workers, and you want to fire workers to deal with the deficit problems. We don't think that's the way to do it.

Let me tell you why: When you're firing workers and they go on unemployment, eventually those folks will go on welfare, and then your welfare bills pile up. So one way or the other, you're going to pay for that incredibly erroneous direction that you're both going in.

If people are not working, and they don't have money, they don't consume. Bruce-Owen Sound, you know what I'm saying? They don't consume. If they have no money, they're not spending. If they don't spend, the corporations that you so much admire are going to collapse, and then there won't be any jobs. On those two issues, you guys are, like, really tight, right?

But I wanted to say, as I disagree with Tories, that on this one we're close. But it's a minor little issue. We're not talking about grandiose issues that separate us. This is a tiny little thing.

1730

This is the beauty about Liberal politics—I love you guys sometimes, I really do, because you guys crack me up a whole lot. This is a typical Liberal bill which does little, but in the minds of Liberals, this is almost revolutionary. This is almost historic, to hear the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan—yes, he'll be back in a second—say it, and my good friend from Ottawa-Orléans. "This is a good bill," they say. "Seniors really need it and we're trying to help." I understand the sentiments, I really do.

The point is, as the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound said, the majority of people will not be able to afford to renovate their homes. They won't be able to. As all of you know—all Liberals who have spoken know—they won't have 10,000 bucks to renovate. You know that they won't; at least, those Liberals who are close to the workers will know there is no money. You will know, Tories and Liberals alike, that 65% of Canadians don't have any access to any pension. You will know that, I think.

Now, if 65% of Canadians don't have any pension, that means they don't have much money in the bank. You'll agree with that?



**Interjection:** Okay.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yes. So we agree with that. That means that there is only going to be a couple of people, a little less than 1%, I suspect, that will apply to get this money to renovate their homes.

The point of it is this: You are directing whatever few dollars there are to the wealthy, those who have the money to spend. And they'll take your money, because why not? If you give them the money to renovate and they have it, they will spend it. The point is, are you helping the seniors who desperately need it? That's the question.

How many will benefit from this little, tiny Liberal idea that is nice on the whole, but it's tiny and won't help very many? That's the question you have to ask, not whether or not theoretically it's a good idea and that you are trying to help seniors. That's not the question. The question is, how many will take it on? How many will be able to afford it? There won't be much of an uptake, is what New Democrats argue, but it's a politically good idea because it sounds like part of an economic strategy.

But think of it: The only two issues you had in the election were this one—think of that. That's an economic strategy, to create 10,000 jobs? This is not going to create 10,000 jobs. It sounds like a politically useful, strategic thing to do, but it won't create much. But is that your economic formula to get people working?

**Interjection:** Yup.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You understand what I'm saying, right? It's a little Liberal idea that doesn't do very much. And you know something else, member from Peterborough? Just as a little reminder, there are 10,000 people waiting for home care—10,000 waiting, not getting anything. You understand?

What you're doing is renovating some homes, but there won't be any home care to take care of the people that you want to stay in their homes. So you've got a little problemo. Most people won't be able to afford it and home care is nowhere to be seen, because you are not spending. And at the same time, you don't do what we say, and that is, make sure that if you're going to give dollars to the corporations, it's directed in a way that will produce jobs over the long term. Don't just give, willy-nilly, money away that you don't have, that we desperately need. If you were able to hold on to that corporate money and provide some home care for people who desperately need it, that would be a useful strategy. That would be saying, "Now we're helping seniors."

But you're not doing that. You're devoting up to \$130 million, assuming there's an uptake, for a few wealthy people who can afford to do it, because the majority won't be able to. Do you understand how bad the idea is?

The member from Beaches–East York pointed out to you in his speech for one hour that when seniors renovate their homes, MPAC, like that ghost that comes to—not a ghost, actually; it's like a vampire that comes after you when you renovate. Instead of helping you out, they're going to charge you some more for renovating your home. So these people renovate their homes and there's

MPAC coming to say, "Hah! We're going to charge you a little more property taxes, because lo and behold, you've got another washroom in your basement or on your first floor."

You haven't thought it through, have you? No, no, no. You haven't thought it through. All you thought was, "Here's our economic strategy to spend \$130 million and create 10,000 jobs." You just made that number up; you just created 10,000 jobs as a number. It's beautiful, the way the Liberals make numbers up.

I guarantee you will not spend more than \$20 million or \$30 million on this program, because nobody will be able to afford it. And if you do spend more, you're giving money away to the wealthy—money you do not have.

It's a little Liberal idea. It's hard to oppose it, really, because it does something. But come on. Please.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's always a pleasure to follow the member from Trinity–Spadina.

I suppose, in a minority government, as the member said, there will be decisions that will be made from time to time as to whether the opposition parties will support each other or whether they agree with each other. I think the member from Trinity–Spadina said that he found a lot in common with the opposition party on this one, and that's his right. Certainly, he's explained that to us, I think, very well.

But when you look at society and at what's happening to our society—the aging of our society and the baby boomers all getting older—what you have is a government in place right now that is looking at ways to assist. It's that simple.

Now, I can understand the member saying, "You know what? We should do this, and do more. I think we can do better than this." But instead, I heard the member saying we shouldn't do this, and I certainly do not agree with that. I think there will always be work for any government in power to do when it comes to dealing with seniors' issues.

What this says to a senior, or to the family of a senior that perhaps is thinking about having a senior in their home again when they haven't had a senior in their home for a while, is that if you need to do something to a granny flat, if you need extra handrails, if you need to put in a stairlift, if you need to do all those things that we know can help accommodate a senior living in a two-storey or a three-storey home—things like renovations to the bathroom; very practical, everyday things that, as we get older, may mean more and more to us—it seems to me that you would want to assist. Any level of government would want to provide assistance.

In this case, what we're saying is that we will issue a tax credit for up to 15% of that \$10,000. So it seems to me that it's not a philosophically driven issue. It is: Do you want to help these families or do you not want to help them? This side of the House is saying they want to help, and I believe that somebody on that side should be supporting that.



**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** All right. Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** It's a pleasure to get up and make some comments today. I haven't had a chance to do a statement; I've done a couple of questions so far.

I want to say, first of all, that it's a pleasure to be back in the Legislature for this session. I want to thank all the people on my campaign team and the people in Simcoe North who supported me.

But I want to particularly congratulate all the members from all the different political parties who are new to this House. I can tell you right now, Madam Speaker, that I've been very impressed with the comments and questions that are coming from all the new members of all three political parties. I think it should make for a good session in Parliament. A lot of very energetic and aggressive people put their name on the ballot. They were successful in winning, and they're here, and it's for the good of all the political parties.

As far as the actual legislation today, talking about the home renovation tax credit, one of the things I found interesting is—I think, in some ways, it's a government's platform commitment. They're more than welcome to bring that forward, and we'll see what the benefit is. There's no question that we've got an aging population, and there's no question that there can be improvements made to homes.

But the thing I do want to stress is that I've been talking to the CEOs in my hospitals in Simcoe North, and one of the things they tell me to stress at the hospital level—they're not asking for as much money for hospitals as you might think, but they are asking me, whatever we do, to make sure that we strengthen home care.

Home care has been sort of a weakness that I think a lot of us have noticed. We certainly hear about it in our ridings and in our constituency offices. I think it's very important, whatever happens, that we don't lose track that it's a very important problem we have, and we have to strengthen it in any way we possibly can.

1740

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Afternoons around this place, things get pretty slow. People tend not to pay attention. People hear the same old, same old, and they tend to zone out. But when the member from Trinity–Spadina gets up to speak, it's like Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, is it not? The dead come to life. It's like a zombie movie: The dead come to life. Everybody pays attention because he's kind of an equal opportunity offender. He really is. He attacks the Conservatives with one breath. He attacks the Liberals with another breath. So the Liberals listen when he attacks the Conservatives, and Conservatives listen when he attacks the Liberals. It's all a wonderful, wonderful play. It's symmetry, truly.

Here's the point. Here's the point New Democrats have been making. Today, 25 in 5 released a report. Did you know, Madam Speaker, that in the last five years

40% more seniors slipped into poverty than before? That's kind of a black version of 25 in 5. They've exceeded themselves in driving more seniors into poverty in the last five years. Not 25% more seniors; 40% more seniors became impoverished in five years under a Liberal majority government than before. That's the reality. That's the reality.

The member from Trinity–Spadina talked about why this bill does not address this. Not only does it not address it, Madam Speaker, but this is the government that's driven seniors into poverty. Do you think rails in bathtubs is going to help that? Do you think a chairlift is going to solve 40% more seniors in poverty? Do you really think a ramp is going to help the senior who can't feed themselves or pay their rent? Do we really think this bill is going to make a whit of difference in that statistic? That's what the member from Trinity–Spadina was speaking about. That's why we listen.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further questions and comments? The member for Ajax–Pickering.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We're talking about seniors, and I realize you don't qualify, but because of the great term you had this past semester, it's certainly nice to see you back in the chair. It's also great to see so many of the old members back, including me—I could be one of the oldest—then the middle-aged ones, then all the young ones coming back. It's good to have everyone here.

I'd just like to make a couple of points, if I may. I've had the good fortune to be made parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors. It seems to me that it was about a year ago that the Minister of Health asked me to go to Oshawa, Ontario, to make a provincial announcement in one part of the province while she did the major announcement in London, Ontario, and that was to introduce funding for what we lovingly call the stay-at-home plan. That was \$1.1 billion over three years, and it's primarily for seniors. So the commitment has always been there, and it has been growing on our part. It may not be perfect at this point, but our objective is to make it as good as it possibly can be.

I have to tell you, we just opened a non-profit home in Ajax which we have been working on for 10 years. I appreciate what some of the older members over there have said. In the end, the only way we could make it happen with federal funding, regional funding and municipal funding was that the province of Ontario went ahead and funded 63% of the 84-unit complex.

That's kind of the way things have been going. I believe, wholeheartedly, that this healthy home renovation tax is one more avenue for us to help seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Trinity–Spadina has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thanks to the friends—few—and the foes—many. I appreciate what some of you are saying. I really do. I just think it's wrong-headed. Your heart, so to speak, may be in the right place, but when you analyze it, as we have, you're really on the



wrong track. You are. Your only defence is, "We're trying to help seniors," which is hard to attack because if you're saying you're trying to defend and help seniors, how could anybody attack you for that? But when you analyze it, there isn't much there by way of the economics component, where you claim that 10,000 jobs will be produced. You probably all agree that that's a lot of blah, blah—balderdash, right? We agree with that, I suspect.

On the social front, I suspect you will agree that because only up to 1% of the population may actually participate in this program, the only people you're helping are the very wealthy. I suspect you agree with that as well, and if you don't see it, you're lying to yourselves. That's quite safe; I said it quite safely.

So between the economics of it and the social components of it, you're not helping the vast majority of people who need it, and on the economic front, as an economic strategy, it is utterly, utterly useless because it won't help to create well-paying, long-term jobs. It will not lift people out of poverty whatsoever, and on the whole the strategy is a pretty, Liberal, weak strategy. Are we going to oppose it? It's so hard, because even the little thing is better than nothing in the end, I suppose.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate? The member for York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, this is a bonus for me because I was not scheduled to have any time, so I'm very delighted to take whatever time, especially coming after the wonderful, colourful member from Trinity—*is it Trinity-Spadina?*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Spadina.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Trinity-Spadina. Rosario, the member from Trinity-Spadina, is too busy conversing. But I would like to remind the member there that sometimes, member from Trinity-Spadina, I usually stop on College Street and have a very nice cappuccino or coffee—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Espresso.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** —espresso, at one of his many bakeries. There is one—I'll tell you why; I will have to put two and two together—called Riviera. This is not a bit of a push for Riviera, but it is a wonderful bakery. I think they are either Italian or Portuguese. The reason why I say that, colourful member from Trinity-Spadina, is that while I have my espresso, I notice people coming in—lots of seniors in the area, as you know—and they go to the rack and they buy the bread. And I notice, Speaker, that not all of them buy one particular kind of bread. There must be a reason. It is because Rocco, the owner—the baker—bakes a bunch of different kinds of bread for different types of people. Analogy, colourful Rosario Marchese, member from Trinity-Spadina: It is because there are a lot of tastes, a lot of needs out there, so people may avail themselves of what's on the market.

As we said before, there has been no government that has done more for seniors than the Liberal government of the past eight years. In doing so, we have addressed the various needs of the various senior populations. Now, if you ask the opposition, Madam Speaker, they say that

we've got to do more for seniors. Statistics show that seniors would like to remain in their own homes, live in their own homes, in their own neighbourhoods, as long as possible. Even a tiny help to extend their stay in their house for a few years would go a long way to give seniors peace of mind. This is what we are doing. The variety of the various programs assists the variety of seniors—some more, some less.

I have to take exception to the fact that this is addressed to the very rich seniors. Absolutely not. I have to remind the members that they voted against a budget that was, I have to say, so rich for the seniors, because 90,000 low-income people, including seniors, do not pay any personal provincial taxes at all. There is a large section of our low-income population, including seniors, that is availing themselves of these particular benefits.

As the member knows, there are other benefits as well. There are tax rebates, GST rebates, a realty tax rebate of \$650 for seniors. And guess who put that on the market? The Liberals.

1750

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** They still won't be able to afford the renovation.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** This is the problem, Madam Speaker: They still won't be able to afford it. The thing is this: We hear a cry from there that we should be doing more for the seniors' health care—and, you know, Speaker, they voted against the stay-at-home strategy.

These are the stats: that seniors want to live longer in their own homes. Fine. Wonderful. It's a nice idea. I agree. How do we try and make living in their own homes better for longer? I could not help but hear one of the members before saying, "Look, we are not talking about a program that gives them a new roof, new windows, a new furnace, even air conditioning." Well, you know what? There is a program that does exactly that. If you are a senior—a low-income senior, not a rich senior—you can have a new roof, you can have new windows, you can have new insulation, you can have new doors. You can have a lot of that stuff. It is there for their benefit.

This one here will help some other seniors. It is not aimed at everybody. It is not aimed at every senior that wants to stay in their own home, but it's a program that will assist those that can afford it and want to stay in their own homes.

The Aging at Home strategy—I don't remember, but I do remember that they did not support it. The Aging at Home strategy speaks exactly to that, Madam Speaker: to allow our seniors to live longer with their families in their own homes, in their own communities, in their own neighbourhoods where they feel more secure, where they have their friends, where they know where to go and buy some immediate necessities. And we said, "Fine, we understand that this is better for our seniors," and we've been doing that, Madam Speaker. We have been helping the seniors to live longer in their own homes.

Now, we heard all kinds of stories with respect to this particular bill, but I have not heard any of the members, including my friend from Trinity-Spadina, say, "You

know what? This may not be the best thing for a particular group of our seniors, but let's send it forth. Let's send it for second reading. Let's go to a committee. Let's see how we can make it better and bring it back to the House." What do they do? What do they do, Speaker? They want to chop it off before we have an opportunity to present it and bring it back to this House.

Madam Speaker, a while ago, while you were still in the chair, you did call for the end of the debate on this particular bill. We said, "No, let it go. We want more debate. We want more debate." So I do hope that we will have an opportunity, with the assistance of the other two sides, because I think we may be short a vote or two—I think. I'm not so sure, but we may be short by a vote or two unless Rosario changes his mind and says, "Well, it's a little thing, but it's still worthwhile supporting it."

I would say, let's send it ahead. I'm sure we're going to have some groups out there that will come and say why they like this bill, why they don't like this bill and what they would like to see changed, and then we'll bring it back. But my feeling is, Madam Speaker, by speaking to my own people in my own area, that if there is one who can avail himself or herself of the program then it's worthwhile, and whatever the government does, we always have to keep in mind that we do it for the convenience, for the betterment of our seniors out there.

Speaker, this is a brand new session here, and we have a long way to go. When we hear from both sides of the House, I have to say, yes, that we have to work together.

We hear comments saying, "This is completely outrageous, draconian." I mean, come on, folks. Come on. Let's calm down. The people out there are watching what we're saying and what we're doing, and I'm saying, don't cut it off completely; let's give it a chance and see how we can make it better to include more seniors to avail themselves of this program.

I hope that indeed we will have that benefit, instead of cutting it off completely. We could have said, "No, we don't want any more debate on the bill today," but we chose to prolong it so you can have the opportunity, and I hope you will avail yourselves of that opportunity. When the bill comes back to this House, hopefully made better with your input, hopefully, you'll be able to support it, and hopefully, more seniors in our province will be able to avail themselves for their betterment, so they can enjoy living longer. If you live longer and healthier, I think it's better for us. Isn't it for everybody? And I think that it's ultimately our wish and should be yours as well.

So I'm very confident, Madam Speaker, that at the end, not only the member from Trinity-Spadina, but we can get a few more in support of the bill. I look forward to that.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. It being 6-ish of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*



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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	

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Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
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<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	



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Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	







*Continued from back cover*

## **Les Horne**

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn ..... 311

## **Public transit**

Mrs. Julia Munro ..... 311

## **Annual report, Auditor General**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) ..... 312

## **PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

### **Male breast cancer**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman ..... 312

### **Child care**

Mr. Michael Harris ..... 312

### **Diagnostic services**

Mme France G  linas ..... 312

### **Wind turbines**

Mr. Bill Walker ..... 312

### **Wind turbines**

Mr. Jim Wilson ..... 313

### **Child care**

Ms. Cheri DiNovo ..... 313

### **Skilled trades**

Mr. Jim McDonell ..... 313

### **Hydro dam**

Mr. Norm Miller ..... 313

### **Aggregate extraction**

Mr. Jim Wilson ..... 314

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

### **Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le cr  dit d'imp  t pour l'am  nagement du logement ax   sur le bien-  tre, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan**

Mrs. Liz Sandals ..... 314

Mr. Jim McDonell ..... 316

Mr. Michael Mantha ..... 316

Mr. Jeff Leal ..... 317

Mr. Robert Bailey ..... 317

Mrs. Liz Sandals ..... 317

Mr. Norm Miller ..... 318

Ms. Cindy Forster ..... 320

Mr. Mario Sergio ..... 321

Mr. Jeff Yurek ..... 321

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 321

Mr. Norm Miller ..... 322

Mr. Michael Mantha ..... 322

Mr. Yasir Naqvi ..... 325

Mr. Michael Harris ..... 325

Mr. Paul Miller ..... 325

Hon. Rick Bartolucci ..... 326

Mr. Michael Mantha ..... 326

Mr. Michael Harris ..... 326

Mr. David Zimmer ..... 326

Mr. Peter Shurman ..... 329

Mr. Paul Miller ..... 329

Ms. Helena Jaczek ..... 330

Mr. Norm Miller ..... 330

Mr. David Zimmer ..... 330

Mr. Toby Barrett ..... 331

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong ..... 333

Mr. Bob Delaney ..... 333

Mrs. Jane McKenna ..... 334

Mr. Jagmeet Singh ..... 334

Mr. Toby Barrett ..... 334

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong ..... 335

Mr. Jonah Schein ..... 336

Mr. Kim Craitor ..... 338

Mrs. Christine Elliott ..... 338

Mr. Jagmeet Singh ..... 338

Mr. Bill Mauro ..... 339

Mr. Jonah Schein ..... 339

Mr. Phil McNeely ..... 339

Mr. Michael Harris ..... 342

Mr. Jagmeet Singh ..... 342

Mr. Bill Mauro ..... 342

Mr. Bill Walker ..... 343

Mr. Phil McNeely ..... 343

Mr. Bill Walker ..... 344

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong ..... 347

Mr. Mario Sergio ..... 347

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 348

Mr. Jonah Schein ..... 348

Mr. Bill Walker ..... 348

Mr. Rosario Marchese ..... 349

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn ..... 350

Mr. Garfield Dunlop ..... 351

Ms. Cheri DiNovo ..... 351

Mr. Joe Dickson ..... 351

Mr. Rosario Marchese ..... 351

Mr. Mario Sergio ..... 352

Second reading debate deemed adjourned ..... 353



# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 5 December 2011 / Lundi 5 décembre 2011

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	299
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	299
Hon. Ted McMeekin.....	299
Mr. Monte McNaughton.....	299
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	299
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	299
Mrs. Amrit Mangat.....	299
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	299
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer.....	299

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Government spending

Mr. Peter Shurman.....	299
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	299

### Government spending

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	300
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	300

### Salary disclosure

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	301
Hon. Deborah Matthews.....	301

### Mining industry

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	302
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	302
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	302

### Municipal taxation

Mr. Steve Clark.....	302
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	302

### Poverty

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	303
Hon. Eric Hoskins.....	303

### Wage protection

Mr. Joe Dickson.....	303
Hon. Linda Jeffrey.....	303

### Rural Ontario

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	304
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	304
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	304
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	304

### Air-rail link

Mr. Jonah Schein.....	304
Hon. Bob Chiarelli.....	304

### Skilled trades

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	305
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	305

## Long-term care

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	306
Hon. John Milloy.....	306

## Public health

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	306
Hon. Deborah Matthews.....	306

## Accessibility for the disabled

Mrs. Laura Albanese.....	306
Hon. John Milloy.....	307

## Transportation infrastructure

Mr. Ted Arnott.....	307
Hon. Bob Chiarelli.....	307

## Emergency services

Ms. Sarah Campbell.....	308
Hon. Deborah Matthews.....	308

## Immigrant services

Mr. Reza Moridi.....	308
Hon. Charles Sousa.....	308

## Renewable energy

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	309
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	309

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	309
-------------------------	-----

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital

Mr. Randy Hillier.....	309
------------------------	-----

### Child care

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	310
-----------------------	-----

### Healing Cycle Foundation

Mr. Bob Delaney.....	310
----------------------	-----

### Leslie Frost

Ms. Laurie Scott.....	310
-----------------------	-----

### Employment standards / Normes d'emploi

Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	310
------------------------	-----

### Humber River Regional Hospital

Mr. Mario Sergio.....	311
-----------------------	-----

### Public transit

Mr. Peter Shurman.....	311
------------------------	-----

*Continued on inside back cover*

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of Ontario**

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 6 December 2011**

**Mardi 6 décembre 2011**



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 6 December 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 6 décembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ATTRACTING INVESTMENT AND CREATING JOBS ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 VISANT À ATTIRER LES INVESTISSEMENTS ET À CRÉER DES EMPLOIS

Mr. Milloy, on behalf of Mr. Duguid, moved second reading of the following bill:

An Act respecting the continuation and establishment of development funds in order to promote regional economic development in eastern and southwestern Ontario / Projet de loi 11, Loi concernant la prorogation et la création de fonds de développement pour promouvoir le développement économique régional dans l'Est et le Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Hon. John Milloy:** At the outset, I'd like to inform the House that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Etobicoke Centre. I'll also be sharing the time with the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that of course is near and dear to my heart as a member from southwestern Ontario. In fact, I had the opportunity to host the minister in my community last Friday in Kitchener Centre, where we had representatives from across southwestern Ontario of the municipal level of economic development organizations and a cross-section of people who represent the business community. They expressed a great deal of support for this legislation. It's a way of using government funds to leverage economic prosperity in southwestern Ontario. I think what they were most pleased with was the fact that the minister was reaching out to consult with them on the way in which this organization would work.

There is a great deal of support and a great deal of interest for this within southwestern Ontario and as well in eastern Ontario. I think all of us welcome the fact that this bill is moving forward.

As I indicated, I will be sharing my time. With that, I will turn it over to the member from Etobicoke Centre.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to rise in the House today in support of the Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act, 2011, Bill 11.

Since 2003, we have worked hard to strengthen Ontario's economy and to create jobs. However, as an export-driven jurisdiction, Ontario's economic growth is tied to our trading partners. In fact, international exports account for roughly one third of Ontario's gross domestic product, and nearly 79% of our exports last year were destined for the United States.

With slow economic recovery south of the border and the debt crisis in Europe it is more important than ever that Ontario focus on strengthening our core economic base and doing everything we can to leverage advantage. The jobs numbers released last week by Statistics Canada showed Ontario's employment grew by 16,000 net jobs in November. This is the largest employment gain of any province, and Ontario's employment has increased by 283,400 net jobs since the low point of the recession in May 2009.

While those numbers are encouraging, the fact remains: There are still far too many Ontarians looking for work, and there are parts of our province that have been impacted by the global challenges more so than others. Southwestern Ontario, with a rich tradition and high concentration of manufacturing jobs, has endured a number of plant closures and layoffs because of the global economic downturn. Eastern Ontario has also a large number of people still looking for work. That's why our government introduced the Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act, which will create the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund and make our successful Eastern Ontario Development Fund permanent.

Madam Speaker, regional economic development programs have proven to be effective in attracting new economic opportunities and in creating jobs because they are designed to meet the unique needs of the regions they serve. Just look at the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, which has helped to create and retain over 11,700 jobs right across eastern Ontario and has helped to leverage \$485 million in private sector investment.

Stakeholders across eastern Ontario recognize the important contribution the program is making to communities and to families across the region. J. Murray Jones, chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, stated: "Establishing permanent funding for the Eastern Ontario Development Fund demonstrates the province's long-term commitment to our region. This innovative program has already provided a tremendous economic boost to communities throughout eastern Ontario."



Madam Speaker, one of the reasons the fund for eastern Ontario has been so successful is because the ministry conducted extensive consultations with stakeholders from across the region in developing the program, and over the coming weeks and months we'll be holding consultations across southwestern Ontario to gather the views and the opinions of all regional stakeholders towards the development of the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. The consultation process will help us to gain a better understanding of the economic opportunities in the region and also what challenges need to be overcome. The consultations will be central to the fund's design, administration, eligibility and application process.

Serge Lavoie, president of the Southwest Economic Alliance, has already spoken out in support of creating this new fund. He is saying: "The proposed Southwestern Ontario Development Fund recognizes the unique economic challenges our region is facing. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the province to create good jobs and attract investment to southwestern Ontario."

As a government, we recognize the value and the uniqueness of our regional economies. After all, strong regional economies help to pay for the education and the health care system that Ontario families rely on. Some say we should simply stand by and leave Ontario companies to the mercy of those global markets, and we disagree. The reality is that each day, Ontario is competing with jurisdictions around the world that offer significant incentives for businesses to invest. This type of support helps Ontarians compete. If we're not willing to help, those opportunities and those jobs that go with them will go elsewhere. If we can provide targeted support to help a company grow and create jobs, to help Ontario families and communities during this time of global economic uncertainty, then that's a good investment in my opinion. The upcoming consultations on the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund will help to ensure that we get the best possible return on public investment.

0910

Madam Speaker, our investment programs are structured to safeguard public money while helping companies grow and create jobs. The money does come with strings attached: Financial support is contingent on the company meeting investment and job targets; we closely monitor each project over the lifespan; and provisions are in place to protect the public's investment in the event that targets cannot be met.

Regional economic development programs are good for business, employees, communities and the Ontario government overall. By working together in this way, we can help families in eastern and southwestern Ontario to keep moving forward in these very challenging economic times.

The proposed Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act is the latest example of how the McGuinty government is working together to strengthen our economy

during a period of global uncertainty. The proposed legislation will bring new opportunities and new jobs to communities in eastern and southwestern Ontario. That's why I'm asking for all members to support the passing of the Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's great to see you in the Speaker's chair. I'm familiar with seeing you there; it's a familiar place for you and you do a great job at it, so it's good to see you back.

Thank you to the member for Etobicoke Centre for her comments in support of this bill—a great member in the Legislature and somebody who I know is going to be working very, very hard alongside myself as we work to move this through the Legislature and seek the support of all members of the Legislature for what is a very, very important piece of legislation, a piece of legislation I was proud to introduce. It's called the Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act, 2011.

I was proud to introduce it because it comes at a crucial time for our economy and at a crucial time for our province. The job numbers for November that came out on Friday were encouraging. Ontario gained 31,800 net full-time jobs—that's full-time jobs—in November. That means we've created 283,400 net new jobs since May 2009; that was the low point in the recession. So we're moving in the right direction. We have a strong base in Ontario to build on, and that's helping us to attract investment and to create jobs.

However the state of the fragile global economy which my colleague from Etobicoke Centre spoke about continues to bring uncertainty to our province, which relies more than others on trade. We're in a fierce global competition to bring investment and jobs to Ontario. It is a fierce competition, Madam Speaker. With concerns still prevalent about Europe's economy and the current state of the US economy, this is no time for us to be sitting back. Here at home, while job gains last month are encouraging, we still have a lot of work to do because there are still too many Ontarians out of work.

I will be speaking today about a number of things. It's important that all members of the House and Ontarians understand the fundamentals that we together have worked so hard to put in place to give our economy this competitiveness edge that it enjoys today. It's also important for us to understand the context of this legislation—why it's so crucial that we support strong regional economies in southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario. I'll speak to the goals and objectives of the legislation and why we feel and believe sincerely that it is the right way to go.

There are numerous success stories from great companies that are doing really interesting work right here in Ontario, and I'll be sharing some of those with the House as well. They are the inspiration for this legislation, they



are the inspiration for this program, and it is their work, their innovation that tells me that we're on the right track.

Let's start by looking at the fundamentals required to build a strong economy—fundamentals we've worked hard to build here in the province of Ontario. It starts with our most important resource, and I think everybody in this Legislature would know our most important resource is our people. Over the last eight years we have invested significantly in education, from JK to post-secondary to Ph.D., and, Madam Speaker, it is paying off. We have stronger schools today, some of the strongest in Canada. In fact, results from a recent pan-Canadian assessment showed that Ontario grade 8 students are tops in Canada in reading, math and science. That's important. Further to that, international authorities say that we have the best schools here in Ontario in the English-speaking world—something all of us on all sides of the House should be very, very proud of.

Test scores are way up and so are high school graduation rates. Some 72,000 more young people completed high school because they're getting the attention and the support they need. That, too, is very, very important in building a stronger economy. That has helped us to attain the highest rate of post-secondary education among the 34 OECD countries. Again, that's important, too.

Equally as important as ensuring our workforce is the best trained and educated in the world is ensuring that Ontario people and workers are strong and healthy. Our efforts to improve and reform the health care system in Ontario are making a significant difference. At the same time, our efforts to promote good health and wellness are also paying off. Health promotion is a key way to ensure that we all improve our productivity. Let's not forget, our universal health care system is also a competitive advantage in attracting investment in jobs.

I want to talk a little bit about infrastructure, too, Madam Speaker. Through investments in infrastructure, we're making a significant dent in the infrastructure deficit that we inherited in 2003. Together we've built a competitive infrastructure system in Ontario. We've built over 5,500 kilometres of new roads—that's like going from Nova Scotia to Vancouver, then up the BC coast; that's a lot of roads. And with over \$13 billion invested in public transit, we're making it easier and quicker to get around in our cities. That means less time commuting and more time with the people that matter most to us. That means an increase in the quality of our lives, but for business, that means less time and costs moving goods, services and people around.

I want to talk a little bit about tax reform as well. In recent years, we've also moved to transform our tax system, and that's made Ontario more competitive in a fiercely competitive global economy. While my colleagues in the NDP may not support it, the reductions made to corporate taxes mean the difference between jobs coming into Ontario or going elsewhere. It's that simple. We want those jobs, we want that investment and we want it right here in Ontario.

With the adoption of the HST, we've modernized Ontario's tax system to be more competitive with other

jurisdictions. According to economists such as Jack Mintz, that will create 591,000 jobs here in Ontario over the next 10 years. Combined, our efforts have moved our tax system for business investment from being one of the worst in the world to one that's now considered to be highly competitive, and that's very important as well. And while the support we've shown for our business community by reducing their taxes has been significant, we've reduced personal income taxes to an even greater degree.

I want to talk a little bit about power. Our electricity system is getting stronger as we rebuild it and bring online clean energy. That's creating tens of thousands of new jobs. As a former Minister of Energy, that's something I'm particularly proud of, but I think it's something all of us can take a great deal of pride in. Our energy system was neglected by previous governments. The simple fact is, businesses and families could no longer rely on our power system. It was also dirty and it was outdated. It was using too much coal and virtually no clean energy from wind and solar.

Today, it's reliable. Businesses can count on the power being there when they need it. That's really important for Ontario, and it puts us, as well, at a competitive advantage. Because I've got to tell you, one of the things on the checklists of businesses and industry looking at where to locate globally is: Do you have a reliable power system? Well, I'm proud to be able to say, here in the province of Ontario, we now have a reliable power system.

I'm proud to say that Ontario is moving to clean, renewable energy, building a growing industry here in Ontario, as I said before, that's creating thousands of jobs for Ontario workers. It also means we can phase out coal-fired generation. Last week, my colleague the Minister of Energy closed two more coal units, bringing us to 10 units closed since 2003. We'll be out of coal altogether by 2014. What does that mean? It means cleaner air and a healthier future for our kids.

0920

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** How is that FIT program working out?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Combined, these key areas help to form the strong fundamentals that are giving Ontario a competitive advantage.

"Why is that important?" the member opposite asks.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, I didn't ask that.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Well, it's important, Madam Speaker. Why is it important that we have the best-educated workforce, the healthiest people, a competitive tax system and the infrastructure and electricity that businesses can rely on? I know the member opposite wants to know why that's important. It's important—in fact, it's critical—because the global competition for jobs and investment is absolutely ferocious. We're determined to ensure Ontario is poised to overcome the challenges of an uncertain economy and seize the opportunities that beckon us.



Think about where our province sits: We have access to a market of 440 million people. I know the member opposite feels that's important as well, because he knows that we're sitting in a good place globally to attract investment. We're within a day's drive of our manufacturing heartland, where there are over 153 million consumers—within a day's drive of what we produce here in the province of Ontario. With access to an unparalleled network of skilled labour, a growing sense of the importance of innovation to our economy and a commitment to research in innovation and development, it's little wonder that in 2010, Ontario was named the top destination for foreign direct investment in North America, second only to California.

So let us be confident together. The fact is, there is no better place to invest in the world than right here in Ontario. I know every member of the Legislature knows absolutely that that is the case. Every member of all parties knows Ontario is the best place in the world in which to invest. So why is it important? Why is it important that we act today, that we move forward with this legislation? Again, let us consider the context: While our economy is recovering and we have a good base here in Ontario, there is still significant work to be done to attract companies to invest in Ontario and create jobs. It's one thing to have a highly skilled workforce; we also need to make sure there are opportunities for those workers to utilize those skills. We've been there to partner with businesses when they needed our support, and it's produced enviable results. Our different economic funds have leveraged over \$8.6 billion in business investment, creating over 12,100 new jobs and protecting over 19,300 existing jobs here in the province of Ontario. Providing support through regional economic development funds has proven to be a very successful tool. That's because they can be designed to meet the unique needs of the region and the people that serve within it. That is why we're proposing the creation of the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund and proposing the continuation of the Eastern Ontario Development Fund.

Southwestern Ontario, with a rich tradition and high concentration of manufacturing jobs, has endured a significant number of plant closures, with people being laid off during the economic downturn. The success of the Eastern Ontario Development Fund in creating jobs and leveraging investment tells us we're on the right track. That's why we want to continue with that program and offer something similar in southwestern Ontario.

As a government, we recognize the value and unique nature of our regional economies. They are truly important. In fact, even just a few weeks ago, Bill Clinton was here in the city of Toronto talking about how important it is to ensure, as we excel and grow as a province, that we don't leave parts of the province behind. It's important for any successful jurisdiction to ensure that we're doing everything we can to grow our economy throughout our jurisdiction, throughout our province, in eastern Ontario, in northern Ontario, in southwestern Ontario and certainly here in the greater Toronto area. That's very, very

important. We understand the need to collaborate and partner with businesses and regional communities to attract and retain investment opportunities and to create and protect good jobs for Ontario families. The proposed Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act would help our regional economies become more competitive, dynamic and innovative and strengthen Ontario's overall economy. Specifically, the act, if passed, would continue the Eastern Ontario Development Fund and create the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. Together, they would promote innovation, collaboration, cluster development and job creation in those regions.

As I said just a minute ago, the Eastern Ontario Development Fund has been hugely successful. With an investment by the province of \$52 million, it has leverage over \$485 million in overall investment. That's a leverage ratio of 8 to 1, which, according to KPMG, is very impressive when compared to other such funds in other jurisdictions around the world. It's something that should be strived for, something that in eastern Ontario is being accomplished and something we'd like to see also happen in southwestern Ontario.

Most importantly, this has created and retained 11,700 jobs in eastern Ontario—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** —something I know the member opposite, who keeps trying to interrupt, Madam Speaker, cares about greatly, because he is from that part of the province, and he recognizes how important it is to create jobs. Some 11,700 jobs created and retained in eastern Ontario are something important to him and to many members of his caucus.

As we did in developing the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, we will be consulting with the people living in southwestern Ontario to gather their advice and input into the creation of this new Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. It's important that we listen to the people, the businesses and those involved in economic development and the community leaders in southwestern Ontario.

In fact, last Friday, Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of joining a number of those leaders in southwestern Ontario, with meetings in London and in Kitchener-Waterloo. That was sort of the beginning; that was the launch of the consultation process. It was just the beginning, but I'm pleased to say that there was a lot of excitement and support in southwestern Ontario for this fund. We had a great discussion, and I'm looking forward to consulting with and working with community, business and political leaders in southwestern Ontario and establishing the details about this fund with them.

We met with business leaders, mayors, wardens, councillors, economic development agencies and community leaders. All are eager to collaborate and work together to build this fund and to create jobs in the region. I want to thank those groups. I want to thank all the groups that I've had a chance to meet with, that we've had a chance to talk with, that have had input into the initiative already—groups such as the Southwest Economic



Alliance, the western wardens, the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance, the South Central Ontario Region and the many municipalities, many of which came out Friday to discuss what the fund should look like with us.

My colleagues in the Ontario Liberal caucus—I want to thank many of them from southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario who have participated in the creation of this fund. All of these MPPs deserve a great deal of praise for their efforts to champion these funds and to champion jobs for their communities. I think that's important. And I want to say to my colleagues across the way: Some of the members from across the way have been champions of this fund as well. The member for Leeds–Grenville has indicated support for and the need for these kinds of funds. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is supportive of these kinds of funds. They have, from time to time, advocated the programs and the good work the programs are doing in their ridings. So I hope that they can convince all of their colleagues on their side of the House about the importance of these funds for their communities, the importance of working with leaders in their communities to create jobs in places like eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario, both of which have been hit hard by the global recession.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'll let him gabble on for a minute and take a drink of water.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Shh.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for bringing him to order.

I must say, though, that I was disappointed when the initial response from the PCs, upon the introduction of this important legislation, was to indicate that they may not be supporting it. For goodness' sake, we just introduced the bill. Give it a chance to at least be seen. Give it a chance to at least work itself through the Legislature. Give us a chance to have some discussions about it. Give the members in that caucus, and particularly the new members, an opportunity to talk to some of the senior members in their caucus, in particular from eastern Ontario, who have been benefiting from this fund, because I know members from the PCs and I know members from the NDP are intent to put politics ahead of jobs. I know they're intent to—sorry, I said that wrong. They are intent to put jobs ahead of politics. I accused them wrongly. I'm hoping they do not put politics ahead of jobs. I'm hoping that that's not what they intend to do. They're not off to a good start. I've got to admit, they're not off to a good start when it comes to that.

0930

But I know the senior members in their caucus will convince the newer members of their caucus and the members of their caucus who represent the province, who are from areas throughout the province, of how important it is to places like eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario to work through these programs, to create jobs and provide opportunities in those communities.

You know, Madam Speaker, one of the things that really motivates me, really inspires me, is that we know that this type of initiative really works, because we know it's working in eastern Ontario. I'll give you some examples, some success stories, of some of the projects and some of the investments we've made.

Take McCloskey International in Peterborough—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Peterborough.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member from Peterborough knows this company and is very, very proud of that and proud of the investments that we've made.

With provincial support of \$654,000, they're producing screening and sifting machines, as well as rock-crushing machines designed for the North American market. So they're reaching well outside of Ontario and creating jobs. They've moved their production to Ontario from Ireland. Nothing against Ireland, but we're happy to take their jobs and we're happy to have companies from Ireland moving here to invest.

Their job target originally was 50 jobs over five years—this is important because we're talking about job creation in eastern Ontario and Peterborough. Their job creation target was 50 jobs in five years. Well, the member from Peterborough will tell you: They've well exceeded that. They've created 69 jobs in just two years. Madam Speaker, that's pretty impressive. That is pretty impressive, and I thank the member for Peterborough for being a big part of that, for advocating for this fund, for making sure that this fund continues. He's a strong voice in this Legislature to ensure that we move forward with this fund today. I ask my colleagues on this side of the House to acknowledge the efforts of the member from Peterborough, because he has done such a good job in showing leadership and ensuring that we're creating jobs in that part of the province.

I want to look at Engineering Seismology Group in Kingston. With \$200,000 from Ontario, they expanded operations to provide real-time monitoring of seismic activity for global mining, oil, gas and geotechnical companies. This is a worldwide endeavour. This is a company that's showing great innovation worldwide. Their job target originally was 14 jobs over three years. Instead, they've more than doubled that, and now they employ 67 people. That's 67 people who might not have been working in the province of Ontario were it not for that eastern development fund. I know Minister Gerretsen was pleased by that, and I know Minister Gerretsen was pleased last Friday to announce an additional partnership with ESG. That's going to create another dozen jobs. Madam Speaker, that's what I call a success story. That's what I call jobs for a part of the province that really needs it. That's what I call a good investment on the part of this province.

These are just two examples that demonstrate the importance of these funds to the regions they serve. Their success is a result of the Eastern Ontario Development Fund being locally developed. We want to make sure those opportunities are also available for southwestern Ontario to continue the success that we've had in eastern Ontario.



The fight for jobs around the world is very fierce. Ontario is well positioned to succeed and excel in that fight. We have a strong base and the core fundamentals of a strong economy in place. We will meet those challenges. With targeted support from regional economic development funds, we can become even stronger, more competitive and attract jobs and investment in Ontario. At the same time, we can ensure that as we build a stronger Ontario, no region in this province will be left behind.

Let us work together to make these programs successful. Let's put job creation ahead of politics. That's important. That's what the people of this province elected every one of us in this Legislature to do, from all three parties: put jobs ahead of politics.

Let's move forward with an initiative that we know is working in eastern Ontario. Let's ensure that the people and businesses and communities in southwestern Ontario can gain access to this project. Let's deliver for our communities what they sent us here to do: create jobs and focus on the economy. Let's, together, face down the challenges of an uncertain global economy. Let's make Ontario an economic powerhouse in the post-global recession world, and let's create jobs and opportunities for us today and for our kids tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, we can do that, but we need to work together if we're going to do that. We on this side of the House fully recognize that we sit in a minority Parliament here at Queen's Park. The people of Ontario recognize that as well. So we're going to be looking to the members opposite to work with us on this.

This is a good initiative. It doesn't have to be a partisan initiative. It's an initiative we can work on together. It's something that's working in the east: Just ask the members of this House, from all three parties, whether it's working in eastern Ontario. Ask the members of this House, because there are a number of PC members that are from eastern Ontario that know that this initiative, this Eastern Ontario Development Fund, is creating jobs in their communities. Ask them if they think this is worthwhile. They'll tell you it is, because I've had members from that side of the House, Madam Speaker, come to me and ask that their communities be included in the southwestern development fund because they know that it's working in eastern Ontario. I've had members from that side of the House come to me and ask us to spend even more, to invest even more in the Eastern Ontario Development Fund because they know it's working. They know it's good for their communities. They know it's creating jobs.

So I say to the members opposite: Let's put partisan politics behind us on this one. Let's work together to create jobs. That's what the people of Ontario expect of us. That's what we were put here to do. And Madam Speaker, if we can do that, that's something that each and every one of our constituents can be proud of. That's something that will benefit all of us, both politically, Madam Speaker, but more importantly it'll benefit our constituents, because our constituents will have jobs that

they can depend on: constituents in eastern Ontario that have seen tough times; constituents in southwestern Ontario.

The finance minister has just come in this morning, and he knows, because he's from Windsor. He's seen some of the challenges the global economy has placed on his constituents and southwestern Ontario in general. He knows that southwestern Ontario and the people of southwestern Ontario are counting on this Legislature, counting on all members of this Legislature from all parties to stand up for them, to stand up for job opportunities, to stand up for our opportunities to build a stronger economy in southwestern Ontario. And let's get over these challenges we face globally. We can do it. We can do it, Madam Speaker; I'm confident we can do it.

I talked about the fundamentals. We have the fundamentals in place here in this province of Ontario. It wasn't easy to get them in place, but we've worked hard over the last eight years together with the people of Ontario, with businesses in Ontario, with academia, with our teachers, with our health professionals to build a strong workforce, an educated workforce, a healthy workforce, a productive workforce. We've got the measures in place, Madam Speaker, to ensure we have a competitive economy from a tax perspective, and the gentleman on my right had a lot to do with that, our Minister of Finance, who did a great job reforming our tax system and giving businesses in this province a competitive advantage with businesses all around the world; attracting investment from around the world. The fundamentals are in place to build a strong economy. Today this Legislature has before it a piece of legislation that's going to take us a step further, Madam Speaker, but we need to work together.

We're looking to members opposite—in particular, those members from southwestern Ontario; in particular those members from eastern Ontario—to stand with us to create jobs in those regions, to stand with us to create economic development opportunities for their communities. Madam Speaker, I'm confident that when they have an opportunity to review the bill, when they have an opportunity to discuss our intentions for the bill, our determination to build strong economies in southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario, members on the other side of the House will support this legislation, that together we'll move another step forward in building a strong economy for the province of Ontario, creating jobs for us today and for our kids tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, thank you very, very much for the time today. I look forward to moving forward with this legislation.

0940

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I listened intently to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Innovation, correct?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** No. Economic Development and Innovation.



**Mr. John Yakabuski:** And Innovation?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Yes.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's what I said.

**Interjection:** You said "trade."

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, Economic Development and Innovation. They took out the "trade." They're not trading anymore, I guess, because if we're not producing anything, we have nothing to trade, I guess, Madam Speaker.

Anyhow, I listened to him intently and closely and resisted the temptation to interject at times, more than I would have chosen to actually do.

This is a bill that we have some grave concerns about because, as a member from eastern Ontario, we've always been promoting the fund in eastern Ontario because it had made its case. And I want to give credit to my predecessors Bob Runciman and Norm Sterling, who served this chamber so well for so long. They were the driving force behind getting this established for eastern Ontario because they made the economic case that eastern Ontario was disadvantaged from other parts of the province. It didn't have the big manufacturing base of other parts of the province, so it necessitated special treatment, just as, years ago, the PC government established the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, which spoke to the challenges that were evident in northern Ontario as well. So the case was made for eastern Ontario.

What's happening here is that the government, even though the minister talked ad infinitum about not putting politics before job creation—that's exactly what they're doing here.

We have some serious concerns about this bill. The eastern Ontario bill exempts the original city of Ottawa, because it's not economically disadvantaged like the rest of the region. There are lots of problems with this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My concern is not that we are encouraging development or investing in companies, encouraging growth or jobs in any portion of Ontario. That's certainly something that we need to do; that's certainly something that's encouraging as a step forward, given these economic times. My concern is this: Whenever such programs are presented, there must be guarantees, there must be stipulations which ensure that jobs will be created in Ontario, much like a corporate tax break. By itself, there is no evidence to suggest that simply giving a company tax breaks or free blank cheques will somehow encourage jobs in Ontario. It will give a company money, there's no doubt about that, but there's no evidence that simply giving a company money will ensure, will guarantee, that people in Ontario get a job.

So similarly, I ask my colleague the minister, through you, Madam Speaker, to ensure that this bill will have stipulations, strong restrictions, strong guidelines which will ensure that jobs are created in Ontario for families to really help the people here and not simply give corporations or companies money with the hope that they will

create jobs in Ontario. Let's make this a commitment. Let's make this a firm reality. Let's ensure that we're really helping people in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm really pleased to speak today on this bill. I think that the history from 2007 to 2011 for the Eastern Ontario Development Fund showing 11,700 jobs created in about 15 ridings is really significant. That's an average of 700 or 800 jobs per riding.

We know the history of it. I think the old eastern Ontario development program was cancelled. It was brought back, basically by a lot of hard work by Jean-Marc Lalonde and more so by Lou Rinaldi, who worked very hard. They worked hard.

I was fortunate to represent the minister for a couple of these openings. It was just great to see. Our part of the investment was generally in the 10% to 15% range, but the investment was all brought in and you could see that in the projects that were chosen the jobs that were there were being guaranteed. There was also always new equipment and new ways of moving into this 21st century that we were looking at creating those new jobs, and it's great to see that it's been very, very effective.

I'm glad to see that we're proposing—and I hope the other parties support this—the same thing in southwestern Ontario. I think it's so important with these small businesses in these small communities to do that. But I would also like to say that I am speaking now for Orléans, because Orléans is losing about 5,000 jobs because of a shift—the federal government has taken jobs from the east end and put 2,800 RCMP jobs in Nepean, and about 10,000 jobs for the Department of National Defence. I will be talking to the minister and my colleagues here to make sure that we move that line into Orléans and that we get opportunities like this from—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** We listened to the minister comment on this new fund that they're bringing forward. We're concerned. Eastern Ontario, because that is what I represent, except a little piece of Brock township, is a part of the eastern Ontario economic development fund possibilities; they can apply.

We've had some good successes. That fund has been established. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke commented that two of our members had brought that forward because they made the case, there was a need, and we've had some good success stories with that.

So we'd like to see the eastern Ontario fund continue. That is not the question. This bill, I think, can jeopardize that fund because you've added in southwestern Ontario. We comment about the \$28 million that is still left after more than three years. We're saying we support the eastern Ontario development fund. We're saying, where's that money that's left there? Where could it go? I believe it comes up at the end of March, so there's still going to be money left over. Does that evaporate? Did you need to



bring in a new piece of legislation? I don't think you did. You could have extended the eastern Ontario fund, which we agree is working and which I support; you could have extended that. So where is that money that is left in there going to go? We've asked for a full accountability. You know, can that be used; are there applications in the process right now that may qualify before the end of March?

We have said we support the eastern Ontario fund. It has shown that it has created some jobs and we support that. I know there are some beneficiaries in my riding of Halliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. So we do have concerns about this bill that we'll be discussing later. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Response? Oh, the minister.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's been a while since I've done this. I appreciate the comments from the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and my colleague from Orléans as well.

Again, I think this is an important initiative. I think this is a fund that deserves to be permanent, which is why we have brought forward legislation to entrench it and to make sure that it is indeed a permanent fund. It's something that, judging by the comments of my friends opposite, they appear to be supportive of, so I'm trying to figure out why they would have trouble entrenching it in legislation and making it permanent. I suspect at the end of the day—I hope—that they will conclude that it's the right thing to do and support it. It may not be unanimous on that side of the House, and that's fair enough, but we hope that in particular the members from eastern and southwestern Ontario recognize how important it is for their community. We certainly would welcome their support for it and, as well, welcome their input, welcome their ideas as to how we can make the fund even more effective.

The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton from the third party made some important comments. There has to be accountability for these investments. There is, in the current fund, a great measure of accountability and the ability to claw back when, indeed, companies don't fulfill their commitments. But I look forward—to the member opposite and the members of the third party, if that's an issue that's important to them—to their suggestions as to how we can ensure that we do everything we can to ensure that these bills are more accountable and that these investments are more accountable.

I thank the members opposite for their comments. I look forward to working with them to create jobs in eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further business? Orders of the day?

**Hon. John Milloy:** No further business, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. This House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 0951 to 1030.*

## WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I rise to ask for unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear buttons in recognition of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we agree? It is agreed. Thank you, Minister.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We're joined in the gallery today by the family of our page Owen Thompson. Ed Thompson, his father, Michelle Lyons, his mother, and siblings Aidan and Olivia are joining us here to watch the proceedings.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Monsieur le Président, je voudrais présenter aujourd'hui Benoit Mercier, qui est le président de l'AEFO, l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens, qui sont ici aujourd'hui.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to welcome to the House co-op students from the University of Waterloo who are working at the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation. They are Ajeev Ramnauth, Wasiq Siddiqui, Vanessa Quidayan, David Geng, Alison Lee and David Nissim.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, yesterday's auditor's report was a scathing illustration of economic incompetence and Liberal waste: 460 pages of throwing money at every problem under the sun without results for the families who pay the bills. I want to bring particular focus to your so-called green energy program that the Auditor General said cost families \$4.4 billion more than it should have.

Given this scathing indictment of this program, Minister, will you agree that the FIT program should come to an end today?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I very much thank the Auditor General for his report and for his good advice. We're already acting on the recommendations to improve the approach.

Let's be very clear on what we have been doing. In 2003, we took the position that we would get out of coal, clean up the air and improve the health of—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, Minister. Please, there is every reason to ask some very serious questions today. I am going to ask all members to reduce the noise level so that we can ask the questions and hear our responses. I would appreciate it very much if we set the tone right away. Important questions are going to be asked today. Thank you.

Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We decided to get out of coal and improve the health of Ontario families by cleaning up the air, and at the depths of the worldwide recession, we decided to use clean energy as a foundation for jobs by doing what 87 other jurisdictions have done, and it's already working. There are jobs and investments.

Improvements, yes. But go back? No. There is a future in clean air and good jobs for Ontario families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, back to the minister: I guess the minister missed the auditor's report yesterday. It was 460 pages, a scathing condemnation of Liberal economic incompetence and spending that is causing families to see their hydro bills go up, their taxes go up, without any results for those families at the end of the day.

Let me ask the minister if this is true: The Auditor General points out in his report that the so-called Samsung deal did not have an economic analysis, nor was it approved by cabinet. Can you confirm those facts for us here today?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Thank you very much, and as I indicated in my earlier answer, we're already using the auditor's recommendations to improve the approach. We've already launched a review of the feed-in tariff process to learn what we can learn from our experience—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Oxford, come to order.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** —and to benefit from developments around the world.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Simcoe-Grey, come to order.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** But Samsung and the feed-in tariff investments have been enormously important for the people of Ontario.

The Premier is in Windsor-Essex today at the CS Wind plant: 400 indirect jobs, 300 direct jobs. Those are futures for families. You know, those jobs feed families, they feed communities and they support the economy of the province of Ontario. We need to stand up for families and their futures in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, given the way that the Auditor General tears apart your approach with the cold hard facts of the jobs lost, the extraordinary cost to families and the rip-off that is the Samsung deal; in light of what the Auditor General said yesterday in his 460 pages, isn't Dalton McGuinty, by going to a Samsung-related plant, basically giving the finger to the Auditor General, who tore apart that report?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask the member to withdraw that last part.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The auditor reminds us to look very carefully at the costs of the decisions that we make. So the cost of staying in coal: dirty air, more than \$4 billion a year in health care costs and air that adversely affects the health of 2.4 million Ontarians who need cleaner air for their health. We decided to proceed, Speaker, with a feed-in tariff program and a green energy approach that would create jobs here in Ontario, direct and indirect jobs that feed families, that support communities, that contribute to the economy of the province of Ontario.

What we really need from the Leader of the Opposition—we know he says no to clean air, he says no to good jobs, he says no to saving the auto industry and he says no to tax reform. We need—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, Speaker, we say no to a Liberal government that is ripping off Ontario families, that is costing us jobs and is driving costs through the roof.

With all due respect to the minister, the Auditor General did not say you should look carefully. The Auditor General rips apart your FIT program, which has cost us \$4.4 billion. He cites study after study. For every short-term, subsidized job you create, you cost two to four jobs in the economy. Given the scathing indictment of your program, why are you basically telling the Auditor General to take a hike by boosting Samsung today?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Speaker, not at all, and we're really going to look at the Auditor General's recommendations to improve the program we've already launched: the feed-in tariff review.

The fact of the matter is that the feed-in tariff approach—87 other jurisdictions have a feed-in tariff approach—has already created 20,000 direct and indirect jobs, brought in \$26 billion worth of investment, and we've got 30 manufacturing plants alone that have decided on Ontario for the future for their jobs—for good jobs.

1040

There are costs in not doing anything, which the Leader of the Opposition forgets. There are costs of staying in coal. There are costs of no jobs. I agree that a



construction job is an indirect job, and it's a good job because construction jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It's a shame, Speaker, that the minister did not show the same concern for the over 300,000 manufacturing jobs—good jobs, full-time jobs—lost under the McGuinty government.

I remind the minister of what the report says. Page 89: No evaluation was done to determine the economic effects of future electricity prices. No evaluation on direct and indirect job creation or losses. Page 108: No economic analysis was done to determine whether the Samsung agreement was prudent and cost-effective.

This is a stunning, sharp indictment of economic mismanagement extraordinaire that is ripping off families. Minister, will you do the right thing? Will you call an end to the expensive program that costs us jobs and runs up our hydro bills?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** In fact, the feed-in tariff approach benefited from the experience of 87 other jurisdictions. The feed-in tariff program was the subject of a lot of consultation discussion and a lot of debate in this House. Can it be strengthened? Absolutely. Do the auditor's recommendations help strengthen it? Absolutely.

Ontario has created 283,000 net new jobs since 2009. But when we reformed the tax system, the opposition said no, even though the day before they'd said yes.

When we combine provincial and federal tax collection, they say no. When we create green energy jobs, they say no. When we have a southwestern Ontario economic development fund, they say no. We say yes to clean air, yes to green jobs, yes to Ontario families and yes to a future for Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The minister uses the term that their feed-in tariff program benefited from the experience of other jurisdictions. Benefited from the experience? You had the highest rates available anywhere in the world. You created a gold rush that made your friends very rich and made a lot of hard-working Ontario families much poorer and lost their jobs.

Let me ask you: If you believe in benefiting from the experience from other jurisdictions, Spain backed away from this program, Germany backed away, the United Kingdom and the United States, when they found that for every subsidized job, it cost two to four jobs in the broader economy. If it works nowhere else in the world, why are you doubling down on an expensive, out-of-touch, out-of-date, wasteful program that is costing us jobs in the province of Ontario?

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** In fact, when we launched the FIT prices they were lower than Germany's

when they launched theirs and lower than France's, among other jurisdictions, when they launched theirs.

This is a simple choice. In 2003, we made the choice to get out of coal. He disagrees with it. We made the choice to clean up the air and improve the health of Ontarians. In the depth of the economic recession, we made the choice to use clean, green energy jobs to support families—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Look, I'll trade you the applause for the heckling in outside voices. Use your inside voices, please.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** In the depths of the economic recession, we made the choice to use clean, green energy jobs—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Oxford, for the second time.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** —to require they use manufactured components from Ontario. Those jobs support families, they support communities and they contribute to the strength of the Ontario economy.

We've chosen clean air, good health, good jobs and a future for Ontario families. We just need the opposition leader on one day to tell us what he's actually for, not just against.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday's auditor's report provided example after example of a government that has grown arrogant and out of touch with the challenges facing everyday people in this province. Instead of protecting people's interests, the government seems to be protecting its own. For example, why are drivers in Ontario paying the highest auto insurance rates in the country despite a government that put in reforms that actually slashed benefits?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Ontario, as it has through most of the last 30 years, does in fact have on average higher auto insurance premiums. This is the government, I will remind the honourable member, that kept those frozen or at least at even growth throughout the first seven years of its term.

We brought forward a number of very important changes last year. This year, Mr. Speaker, we created the task force on automobile insurance fraud. We received the interim report of that task force, which addresses many of the questions that the Auditor General has quite appropriately raised. I made that interim report public.

I look forward to the response from the people of Ontario—consumers, as well as the opposition and others—and to move forward to implement those recommendations to ensure that we continue to build on our record of keeping rate increases lower than they had been across the previous two governments.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, it's not just the growing cost of auto insurance. Electricity rates are climbing faster than auto insurance, hurting consumers and businesses. Yesterday, the auditor pointed to example after example where the government has switched tracks and left families paying the price.

Why does the government pay for an Ontario Power Authority to plan our electricity system and then ignore the plans that they develop?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, when the old Ontario Hydro had been broken up, there was no planning function left for the electricity system. It was left to a spot market, which even market advocates said wasn't effective and didn't provide for future power needs.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have moved aggressively. First of all, we are no longer threatened with rolling brownouts or blackouts every hot summer day. We have cleaner air. We are creating a new industry in renewable energy that's creating thousands of jobs.

We acknowledge the challenges pointed out by the Auditor General across a variety of functions and, as we have done each and every year since we took office, we respond to each and every one of the recommendations raised, ensuring that Ontarians have and continue to have solid government, a cleaner environment and better public services.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** And in fact, they ignore the plans that are prepared by the OPA. I just thought I'd add that.

Speaker, families are struggling with very, very tough times. They want a government that actually stands up for them. Instead, they have a government that says, "The dog ate my homework."

Amongst many of the issues that the Auditor General raised yesterday, another question that I've been asking came to light. And I'm going to ask that question again today, Speaker. How much are ratepayers going to pay for the cost of cancelling Liberal private power deals in Mississauga and Oakville?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, this government has done a great deal to help families. We created the Ontario Child Benefit, a \$1.3-billion assistance to families of modest means. The leader of the third party and her party voted against it.

We created the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit, a 10% refund to all Ontario energy consumers. That leader and her party did not support it. They want to make it 8%.

We have a bill before the House today, and I look forward to the leader of the third party's support, on our Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. You know what, Mr. Speaker? It helps senior citizens stay in their homes. Not only do they get a tax break, but it helps us manage long-term-care costs in the future.

We've had a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## ENERGY CONTRACTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Acting Premier. I want to focus, actually, on fixing some of the problems that the Auditor General identified yesterday. You know, electricity retailers are telling people that their contracts offer them long-term price protection, but the auditor, of course, found that consumers are actually paying anywhere from 35% to 65% more than those on a regulated price plan.

So if door-to-door retailers are costing households so much more, why is the government even allowing it?

1050

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We listened very carefully to the experience of consumers around the province, and I really appreciate the auditor's observations and recommendations in this regard. We brought in special consumer protection legislation in this area that took effect just January 1. Like all, I am concerned about the auditor's observations and recommendations, so we're going to do a detailed analysis to see how these new consumer protections are working to benefit consumers to make sure that they are being protected and they're able to make an informed choice as to how they'd like to proceed with their energy needs in the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, here are the kinds of claims made by the retailers: "Protecting your household against potential electricity price increases is always a good decision."

Speaker, the reality is, signing an electricity contract could leave people paying up to \$2,000 more for electricity. Now, if consumers are getting fleeced, which it's pretty clear that they are, why is this government continuing to allow this practice to happen in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Those concerns are exactly why we brought in the consumer legislation. We listened; we responded: legislation that provides for a period of time after any sign-up where people can decide they don't want the contract, opportunities to get away from any contract that's been entered into, additional reporting requirements that people have to comply with. We listened carefully, and now, because they just came in January 1, we need to see how they're working. We need to make sure that consumers are being protected.

But let's be very clear: We're determined to protect consumers, we're determined to make sure they can make an informed choice in all circumstances and we're determined to make sure that they can make the choice that's right for them. We'll look and see how it's working and take whatever steps are required.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, as this minister even suggests himself, it's been a year and still there is a problem here, and that shows the arrogance and disinterest of



this government in the plight of everyday families that are struggling to make ends meet.

The auditor's report suggests, in fact, that there are some 630,000 families out there spending thousands of dollars more than they need to just to keep their lights on. Seventeen thousand complaints were received over the past five years, and up to 90% of those were about retailers.

So I'm going to ask the question one last time: When is this government going to put an end to this practice? Why do they continue to allow this kind of retailing to continue in Ontario?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** As I said, Speaker, it's an issue that has greatly concerned this government, greatly concerned the members of this House. That's why we acted on the issues and concerns and brought in consumer protection legislation. To be fair, that legislation only took effect on January 1. A lot of very important new rules provided opportunities where consumers could cancel a contract without any penalty, enabled them to cancel even after that period of time by limiting penalties and provided more information and a lot more oversight. So to be fair, we're seeing how they work. We're very concerned about the auditor's observations and recommendations. We're going to match up the experience and take his recommendations. If further action is required, let's be clear: For the protection of consumers, we're going to take the action that's required.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, Mr. Speaker: My question is to the substitute Premier. Minister, yesterday Ontario's Auditor General confirmed that the Liberal legacy of making Ontario unaffordable for families was made evident. The auditor revealed that under the Liberals, LCBO costs are too high, auto insurance rates are too high, the green energy is too expensive—what has been obvious to Ontario families for so long. How long has this completely escaped the Liberal observation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I refer the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, to page 16 of the auditor's report: that "the LCBO had the lowest overall alcohol prices of all ... jurisdictions, with the third-lowest prices for spirits and beer, and the lowest wine prices." So first, I invite the member to get his facts straight.

Second of all, when that member was a member of the government, auto insurance premiums went up 43% in the last two years of their tenure. We in fact brought them down over the first eight years of our administration, and last year brought forward further reforms to auto insurance that will help manage costs in the future and keep the rate of growth low.

There is still more to do. We recognize and welcome the recommendations of the auditor, and I look forward to having the input of the opposition as we move forward—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** When the Auditor General wasn't busy pointing out how the Liberals have made life unaffordable for families, he was revealing more Liberal waste: \$1.1 billion on medical specialists with no follow-up to ensure you got value for money; the most expensive legal aid system per capita in Canada with the least help provided to low-income Ontarians; and \$100 million annually on Trillium grants with no idea if the best projects were chosen or if the money was indeed spent properly.

The Liberals didn't get the message after the Auditor General's eHealth report, and they didn't get the message after the OLG report. Why should Ontario families believe that the McGuinty government will get the Auditor General's report on Liberal waste this time?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I remind the member opposite that he, in fact, voted against expanding the powers of the Auditor General which this government took. Let me give him a little history lesson. In 2004, we extended the jurisdiction of the Auditor General to school boards, universities, hospitals and the broader public sector, and he said, "I think the Legislature has been pretty good about expanding our powers. A decade ago we weren't allowed to go into the broader public sector." The Conservative government wouldn't let them. They didn't want that transparency.

Then we gave him the power to review advertising because that party had spent close to a billion dollars a year on partisan advertising, Mr. Speaker. Then we let him look at Hydro One and OPG, and what did we find there? A treasure trove of Tory abuse, which we put an end to.

We welcome the auditor's report. We welcome his power—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** This question is for the Acting Premier. Two years ago, this government brought in reforms that were supposed to protect drivers in Ontario. Instead, benefits were cut and rates kept on rising. Now the auditor reveals that this government has dropped the ball on protecting Ontario drivers.

Will this minister admit that, in light of the evidence we have, the plan is simply not working for drivers in Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I remind the member opposite that, since 2003, rates have risen at a slower pace than inflation, which was in stark contrast to when the NDP were in power, when they went up 26.7%. We have a number of initiatives under way, including the anti-fraud task force, which presented their report to us.

I acknowledge that there continue to be challenges with the regulation of auto insurance. We will continue to build on our record to ensure that Ontario consumers have fair rates. We welcome the Auditor General's

review of our policies. He's brought forward a number of very progressive recommendations. I look forward to working with the member opposite as we implement them to ensure that Ontarians continue to benefit from fair auto insurance rates.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the minister fails to see that in Ontario we are paying the highest insurance in Canada. We are paying the highest insurance in Canada, despite having the lowest accident rate. Instead of defending drivers, this government is committed to defending juicy profits for insurance companies. In fact, the report has indicated that they are so juicy that everyday people are getting squeezed. People like my constituents in Bramalea–Gore–Malton are the ones getting squeezed.

Will this government take steps to ensure that the drivers in Ontario are protected, instead of the insurance companies making juicy profits?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the member is new, and he wasn't here. We in fact brought forward changes because, as the auditor pointed out, the handling of these claims has not been efficient. We brought forward the changes to deal with that, and they're being implemented over the course of the summer.

You know, the member opposite and his party advocated public automobile insurance in the past—still don't know if they're for that or against it right now.

1100

I think consumers can be well assured that we are getting things under control. We have been. We'll work with the auditor.

You know, even myself, Mr. Speaker, I see people who drive expensive BMW sports cars, and they might experience high auto insurance rates; I don't know for certain. But I would invite the member opposite to look at our record. We've done the things he's asked us to do. I look forward to working with—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question is for the Attorney General.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Minister, we've been hearing a great deal regarding the issues surrounding Operation Come Home. As you are aware, this is a charitable—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** As you are aware, this is a charitable organization that helps the homeless youth in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and in the Ottawa area. This is an initiative that deserves credit for doing a great service during this holiday season.

Minister, Operation Come Home is working with BottleWorks and Beau's brewery to deliver beer, and

they are raising funds to help those in need at this time of giving.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is simple: What quick solution has our government brought in to ensure that Operation Come Home can resume operations this holiday season?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Well, Speaker, the opposition may laugh about this, but we found a situation that needed to be corrected, and we took action and corrected it, right there and then. Quite frankly, it would not have happened without the strong advocacy of the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

We have brought in a regulatory exemption that will allow BottleWorks, as run by Operation Come Home, to continue the fundraising and job opportunities which they are creating for the homeless right now. We have brought forward changes to licensed liquor delivery service in Ontario so they can now buy alcohol directly from any authorized retail store, including small craft breweries and wineries, instead of only from the LCBO or the Beer Store.

We recognize this is a great initiative. It helps an awful lot of people, it's the right thing to do, and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Minister, this is great news, and I'm happy to hear that this government has listened to the concerns raised and acted so quickly to support a local cause and local jobs. However, while I'm pleased with that action that has been taken, I must raise some concern that maybe other charities in the province may want to attempt to deliver this service.

Mr. Speaker, will these changes be more widespread across the province to allow for similar organizations to take part in providing charitable work and creating local jobs?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** As the member well knows, this particular matter came to our attention as a result of Operation Come Home in the Ottawa area. We've made very sensible changes in a very short period of time that will make it easier for all Ontario licensed delivery services to operate in a modern economy by removing all unnecessary restrictions.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I wish the members would listen to this answer, Speaker.

We will also be consulting with stakeholders over the next 15 months on amending the Liquor Licence Act to allow delivery services, such as those operated by charitable organizations, to enter into business relationships from which everyone can benefit.

But may I also remind people: This is the holiday season. Please enjoy alcohol, but use it wisely.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Yesterday, the Auditor General handed down a multiple-count indictment of the govern-



ment's green energy policy. When it comes to the FIT programs, wind and solar, the Auditor General stated, "You can't connect them to the grid," "It looks like we don't need the capacity anyway," and "Wind and solar are not very reliable." He also shocked homeowners when he announced that their hydro bills would go up by 8% every year thanks to the heavily subsidized wind and solar program.

Speaker, the Auditor General repeated everything our party warned about during the election. So, Minister, will you finally admit what the Auditor General has told all of Ontario: that your green energy plan, especially the FIT program, is a complete disaster and utter—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister of Energy?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** And again, I do appreciate the auditor's recommendations—acting on them.

This is about the choices that we made. In 2003, we made the choice to clean up the air.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I know they disagree with that.

We made the choice to get out of coal. They disagree with that. There's a cost to stay in coal: \$4 billion-plus a year, human suffering, illnesses. At the height of the recession, we made a choice to create jobs for Ontarians and accelerate the cleanup of the air. The 20,000 jobs, billions in investment—it's all about the choices you make. We stand for clean air, good health, jobs for Ontarians and a brighter future for this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** We heard in the Auditor General's own words that the cost of every green energy job is \$300,000, and for each job created, "two to four jobs are ... lost in other sectors." We also learned that we lost \$1.8 billion over six years exporting surplus power while we continue to add unreliable wind and solar projects. So, why does the Premier show complete contempt for the Auditor General's report and choose to visit, of all things, a wind facility today? Seriously, Minister, do you and the Premier not get it?

Will you finally admit today that the Auditor General got it right and that your green energy plan is driving up the cost of hydro bills and killing thousands of private sector jobs?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** You know, I always thought my friend opposite was in favour of solar power, because I seem to recall there are solar panels on the North Bay city hall roof at this very moment. But maybe I'm mistaken.

Renewable energy is all about cleaning up the air. It's all about making sure we have healthy Ontarians, making sure we support the health of Ontarians, and we're using it as a platform for the jobs of the future. It's true: The world is going greener. We want to be leaders, not followers, because there are no jobs for followers. We've got 20,000 jobs today. We've got billions in investment.

The Premier's at CS Wind, Tillsonburg, London, Newmarket—too many places to list in the minute I have. It's all about futures for Ontarians, clean air—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Yesterday, the Auditor General's report shows that Ontarians are paying thousands of dollars in tuition fees to attend private career colleges but often end up with subpar training and few job prospects.

The government has known about quality problems at colleges for years. But today, colleges that were supposed to be closed down continue to illegally operate, and colleges have repeatedly violated regulations, such as instructor qualifications going uninspected. Why is this government failing to protect the 60,000 Ontarians who attend private career colleges?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thanks very much. I appreciate the question from my honourable friend opposite.

First of all, out of the 60,000 students in the system, most get a very high-quality education.

Second of all, we have now covered off all of the colleges that are determined to be high-risk. They've been fully inspected. We have expanded our inspection program. All high-risk schools will be inspected within three months; those being identified as medium-risk schools, which is the level we are now at, within the next 24 months.

We are under one of the most aggressive expansions of our inspections program. We have gotten through all of the high-risk colleges. We are now in the middle of going through the medium-risk colleges. We can ensure Ontarians that the over 400 training colleges and private sector schools will be well managed—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

1110

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** In 2006, the government passed the Private Career Colleges Act and claimed it would get tough on career colleges. But today, the ministry still has only eight inspectors for 470 colleges, and it only inspected 30 campuses last year despite identifying 180 risks of violating basic educational standards. Taxpayers have subsidized these colleges to the tune of half a billion dollars over the last three years.

When will the government finally hire the inspectors it needs and ensure students at career colleges get the training that they pay for and they expect?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, we have actually done considerably more than that. In the first nine months of this year alone, over 100 actions have been taken against illegal operators. That's the most aggressive enforcement in the history of this province, better than the party opposite ever did when they were in power.

The ministry has also developed a student satisfaction survey for students affected by a school closure and protected under the Training Completion Assurance Fund, the TCAF. The survey is in use and was issued to the first group of students in November.



The ministry has recently completed a comprehensive review of the performance measures of the collection process and has developed six performance indicators for the private career college sector. These performance indicators are compatible with the key performance indicators used for public institutions.

We're now holding our colleges, for the first time, to the exact same standards that our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** My question is for the Minister of Education. This morning, there was a press conference hosted by the member from Aurora, attended by the member from Nepean–Carleton and the member from Thornhill—a very disturbing press conference where Charles McVety was.

You know, as a former school trustee for 15 years and, more importantly, as a parent and significantly so as a legislator, to me, every student's rights must be protected. They must feel safe, they must feel welcomed and they must feel respected for who they are if in fact they're going to succeed.

When someone refers to our legislation as radical social engineering, it is disturbing, to say the least—absolutely disturbing, to say the least. It's so concerning when you consider that, in fact, we were supposed to be working together.

So Madam Minister, could you please explain to me what is so radical about the Accepting Schools Act?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre for her question and for her advocacy on behalf of students for many, many years.

I, too, was deeply, deeply disturbed by what I heard this morning. To the member's question, there is absolutely nothing radical about ensuring that every student has the support that they need to succeed in our schools. Our plan is about creating safer schools, about creating places where intolerance is not accepted and where inclusion is the only option.

Last week I was heartened to hear that I shared this goal with the member opposite from Kitchener–Waterloo. I remain optimistic that this House will be united to fight bullying in our schools, but the official opposition needs to be clear about where they stand. There is no room for division—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. It's not traditional to have a point of order during question period, but I will entertain the member immediately after question period. Thank you.

Supplementary question?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I thank the minister for her answer. I want to say a special thank you to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. We sat in this House last week saying how we would work together to be able to move forward a very important piece of legislation so that our children, in fact, can feel safe, welcomed and

respected regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or whatever. That's what we are really all about. Our responsibility and our obligation as legislators is to protect others who require our protection. I'm hopeful that you are not a house divided over there; that you're actually going to continue to work with us. You know, there was some terrible homophobic pamphlets that went out during the election. That kind of nonsense must stop, must not continue. So I'm asking you, Mr. Speaker, if the minister could please let me know how this legislation can actually work by bringing us together.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Mr. Speaker, the member is right. The language we heard this morning in the PC-sanctioned press conference was all too familiar. While our proposed Accepting Schools Act seeks to set out the legislation, the kinds of supports that all schools must provide to students, the opposition continues to divide Ontarians. Mr. Speaker, last week—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Stop the clock.

I need two things to be mentioned here, and that is, the questions are supposed to be of the government of the day and the policies of the government of the day, and the minister will confine herself to answering government policy of the day.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I am standing, and I'm asking for attention, please.

My request is that we stay focused on government business of the day in the answers and the questions.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Mr. Speaker, last week, I stood in the media studio at Queen's Park with over a dozen partners in education, including public and Catholic school board associations, public and Catholic teachers, students representing both school boards, to stand up against bullying. Ontarians are united against bullying. Students need our support now, and they deserve support from each and every member of this House in a unanimous way.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. The Office of the Auditor General has released its 2011 annual report, which states that Ontario does not have significant measures in place to combat auto insurance fraud, which may cost the system as much as \$1.3 billion. Benefit costs in cities like Brampton rose by 37% a year in recent years, compared to just 14% in other areas of the province. The average cost of automobile accident insurance claims in Ontario is five times higher than the average injury claim in other provinces. Will the government commit to establishing a special unit of the crown attorney, an office of financial crimes prosecution, that would fight fraud and keep Brampton and other Ontario drivers from paying more?



**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He is a new member; he would not have been here for the last budget, when we created a task force. That task force was in the budget. The member's party voted against it. That task force has now presented its interim report. We made that report public last week. It has been widely circulated, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to a response to that report.

By the way, the task force is chaired by a former deputy minister of the federal finance department, a well-regarded Canadian. There are comprehensive recommendations that involve the Ministry of the Attorney General and a number of others with respect to fraud.

I welcome your question and I thank you for it. I just wish your party had voted for the initiative seven months ago, as we did on this side of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?  
1120

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the Deputy Premier: I have read the report from the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force. The task force itself reports that fraud is extensive, increasing, and has a substantial impact on auto insurance premiums. In fact, in 2009, there were 75,000 injury claims filed while there were only 62,000 injuries from automobile accidents actually reported—a 20% difference.

Fraud can have a financial impact through increased costs in premiums and a public safety impact through staged accidents. Both the US and Britain have dedicated insurance fraud investigation organizations. These units have dramatically decreased fraud. Since the Auditor General and the task force have acknowledged that fraud is a growing concern, will the government take action and establish a special unit of the crown attorney, an office of financial crimes prosecution, to fight auto insurance fraud?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we will act on the recommendations of the report. I thank the member for having reviewed it. He correctly notes that the report does, in fact, deal with those issues. It is a little difficult to understand because his party, the caucus, and his leader voted against it.

It was a good initiative. It has been well received by the industry. I remind the member opposite that the party he's a member of—in their last three years in office, insurance rates went up 43%. We're not going to go back; I can assure you of that. I know you weren't part of that; you're a new part of the caucus. Many of your colleagues were. Even your leader said with regard to your insurance record—this is what the Leader of the Opposition said: "We lost track of the advice ... and as a result insurance rates went up." That hasn't happened under our government. It won't. I look forward to your support of the task force's recommendations.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** To the Minister of Agriculture: Entire communities in the Windsor and Essex area have been affected by unprecedented rainfall and major flood-

ing. Although this is not a new phenomenon, the incidences of rainfall have increased in frequency considerably in the last couple of years.

For residents like George Tuer of Belcrest Beach, this is the 11th flood in eight years, with damage of up to \$20,000 and the risk of increased insurance costs. For the community, the floods have put more strain on the sewer systems, emergency services and the resources of municipalities that are already strapped for cash.

My question is simple: Does the province have a plan for the residents of Belcrest Beach so that they don't have to undergo constant flooding, property and emotional damage?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** We're always open to working with our friends on the other side of the House as they bring to our attention issues of concern. We are always open to hearing those and working with our stakeholders, which is why we've developed the southwestern economic development fund and why we've stood so consistently with rural Ontario on a number of initiatives—everything from rural economic development to our highly-touted risk management plan, which the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has referred to as the single most significant social policy impacting the agricultural community in the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It sounds like the minister is struggling for a little bit of an answer there, so I'll help him.

Under the Drainage Act, residents are responsible for paying for improvements to the system. Residents of Belcrest Beach are being told that they are the ones who have to call for an engineering study. Residents are the ones who are also being told that they have to foot the bill. So far, residents have paid \$350,000, and the next round of Band-Aid repairs is expected to be around \$55,000.

Why isn't the province stepping up to hold its end of the deal for the residents and farmers of Belcrest Beach?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Well, I don't know if the honourable member opposite knows this or not, but to the best of my knowledge, we have not been approached by the community with any specific requests to consider some kind of emergency relief. We, of course, are always open to hearing from communities with respect to those issues, many completely beyond control. We don't control the rain here any more than the good farm constituents do there.

So if there is a request that is to be forthcoming, we look forward to hearing more about it, and we'll respond with all the due diligence and respect that our rural constituencies deserve.

#### COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, in my riding of Oak Ridges—Markham my constituents are concerned about the impact that coal-fired generating plants are having on their health.



From 1995 to 2003, the province was dependent on this dirty form of electricity, and under the Conservative government the use of coal increased an astonishing 127%.

As a physician, I know first-hand that the emissions from coal plants pollute the air we breathe and lead to more respiratory illness in the province. I think we can all agree that replacing coal with cleaner sources of power is the right approach to a more modern and reliable green energy system.

Can the minister tell this House what the province is doing to rid our system of this dirty form of electricity?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I want to thank the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for the question. It's a very important one, because it is all about the health of Ontarians.

You know, 2.4 million Ontarians have a respiratory challenge of some sort and depend on clean air, or their abilities are limited or worse, so we made a decision in 2003 to get out of coal. It's never going to be easy and it has its costs, but the costs of staying in coal are more than \$4 billion a year and thousands of people adversely affected by bad air.

Are we making progress? We're 90% out of its use. We've shut down 10 of 19 units. We are on track to get out of coal completely and clean up the air through no more coal by 2014.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you, Minister. My constituents and I support Ontario's shift to cleaner sources of energy. We want to ensure that our children and grandchildren have a healthier future. I'm very pleased that Ontario is on track to replace dirty coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of power by 2014, and I'm proud to be part of a government that is undertaking one of the biggest climate change initiatives in North America. I know that this plan will have several positive benefits for all Ontarians.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell us what impact this initiative has had and will have on my constituents and the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Last Thursday, I was with the Minister of Health and the member from Scarborough–Agincourt at Sick Kids Hospital. We met a young woman there who'd been helped greatly by the respiratory clinic. She'd suffered for years—and still suffers—from asthma. It's much better now, but a couple of years ago, she couldn't walk and keep up with her friends. Now, through the help of the respiratory clinic and, yes, cleaner air, she's able to join the cross-country team.

Clean air affects people in their everyday lives. It affects the young. It affects the old. It affects all in between. It affects 2.4 million Ontarians. We need to clean up the air. We're going to continue the progress, get out of coal and improve the health of Ontarians.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Todd Smith:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, the Auditor General released his

report, a scathing condemnation of that government. He noted that your green energy strategy costs two to four jobs in other sectors for every job it creates in energy generation. Independent estimates suggest that your policy will increase small business energy costs by 8% every year, increasing hydro costs by almost 50% since before this policy was introduced.

When will you get off the backs of small business owners all over this province and stop killing jobs in Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Actually, we're very focused on the bottom line. When we brought in the industrial rate energy policy, that was about improving the bottom line of businesses. When we brought in tax reform, the HST, that's about improving business competitiveness. They said yes the day before; they said no the day after.

When we harmonized the taxes, that benefits businesses. When we decreased the cost of manufacturing plants and equipment in Ontario, that's about improving businesses. When we saved the auto industry, that was about helping businesses. The southwest economic development fund: That's about helping businesses.

They say "jobs," but every initiative, they say no to. When will they stand up and say yes to something? Yes to jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

1130

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Perhaps the minister didn't hear my question. It had to do with the Green Energy Act and the fact that it's killing jobs in this province.

The Auditor General's report came out yesterday. Perhaps someone should read it to the minister and he can stop having the fairy tale that's being read to him by the Premier read to him, as it has been.

This criticism isn't coming from this side of the House. The criticism is coming from this book: the Auditor General's annual report. According to his report, small businesses were paying \$38 a month for renewable power on their hydro bill in 2010 and will be paying \$500 a month for that same amount of power by 2018.

How can you stand in the House and expect Ontario businesses to keep creating jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** You know what? Jobs feed families. The 20,000 jobs through the green energy program already—they feed families. The jobs that we protected and created through the HST—they feed families. The jobs through the saving of the auto industry, half a million Ontarians—they feed families. The jobs through tax reductions for small businesses and for plants and equipment in Ontario—they feed families.

But you know, every time we say yes to jobs, they say no. Every time we bring an initiative like the HST, they change their mind and say no. You can't do one thing one week, one thing another—



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

### WOMEN'S SHELTERS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the minister responsible for women's issues. The city of Toronto is proposing funding cuts to three women's shelters which are partially funded by the province. Is she aware of these cuts and what is she doing about it?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm very pleased to have a chance to stand up and speak about protecting women, today being December 6. Today has a dark history in our province and I know that it is a day when we should all think about what steps we can make to ensure that women are more protected here in Toronto and right across the province. That's why I'm so proud of the efforts that our government has taken with respect to developing a sexual violence action plan, a domestic violence action plan.

Certainly I take the question away with me today, and I understand one of the members opposite has come over to inform us of that. As we do every single day, we take away the issues and ensure that women are safe and protected in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, it is December 6. It's the national day of action on violence against women; we all are wearing the buttons. But wearing the buttons is simply not good enough.

Bellwoods House in Toronto is one of the places that is looking to get severe cuts and perhaps shut its doors to women. In houses like that, this is a serious problem. This particular house has women that are over 50 years old fleeing domestic violence as its residents. In fact, one of the residents said this: "It's going to pull me back into a life I don't want to live," if that shelter closes.

So my question is a very, very obvious one. These women need a place to go. They need a safe haven from violence that they experience in their home. I want to know from this minister, will she commit to finding a solution that spares these shelters from the city's budget cuts?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** On this day and every other, it is incumbent upon us in the Legislature to raise issues and work with those in other levels of government. But those that have responsibility at the city of Toronto need to take that responsibility seriously. I take my responsibility to protect women in this province very seriously. That's why we have stepped in on numerous occasions when the federal government stepped away and we will continue to advocate and champion on behalf of women; it's why we are investing more than \$175 million in 182 agencies that offer counselling programs and services to victims of abuse.

But, Speaker, we cannot do it alone. We need partners at all levels of government.

### MEMBERS' COMMENTS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Nepean—Carleton on a point of order.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm making a point of order on section 23(h), where a member "makes allegations against another member"; on section (i), "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member"; on (j), "charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood"; and (k), "uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder."

Earlier in question period, both the Minister of Education and the member for Etobicoke Centre made allegations on members, including myself, regarding a press conference which took place in these assembly grounds earlier today, which I briefly attended as critic.

My views on anti-bullying, in this chamber, have not changed. My views on anti-bullying are well-known in this chamber. And Mr. Speaker, for those members to impugn a motive or utterances which do not reflect me or my values need to be held to account. Thank you very much.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. On the same point of order, the member from Newmarket—Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On the same point of order, on all four counts of section 23(h), (i), (j) and (k), Speaker: This morning, I did sponsor a press conference at the request of citizens who wanted to share with the Legislature and with the public their views on a piece of legislation tabled in this House. I am one who believes that people in this province should in fact have the opportunity to express their views, regardless of what they might be. We say in this House often that this House is not ours; it is the people's House. It's for that reason that when I was called and asked if this group could in fact use the media room to make their point, I agreed. And yes, I did attend the conference, along with some of my colleagues, for the same reason that others in this place from time to time attend a media conference: to hear what the point is that is being made. I think that's my responsibility.

Having said that, the last thing I expected today from the member from Etobicoke Centre was for her to stand in her place and ascribe to me personally, other members of my caucus and the entire caucus—by not only the member but the Minister of Education.

Speaker, words were used by the member from Etobicoke Centre as well as the Minister of Education that are highly offensive to me personally; that are offensive not only to members of my caucus but to everyone in this province. The last thing that we would have expected from the member opposite and from the Minister of Education is the kind of insult that was levelled against us this place.

Speaker, you knew. As you were sitting in your chair you saw what was happening here and the kind of

reaction that that question and the minister's response evoked from not only those who were directly named by the member from Etobicoke Centre but the entire PC caucus. According to my reading of the standing orders, Speaker, when in fact a question like that is put and the reaction is what it was, it is the responsibility of the Speaker to rule that question out of order and the conduct out of order.

Now, Speaker, I ask you to make your statement and to rule on this matter because it will set a tone for how this House is conducted and how members are allowed to treat each other in this place. If that is the kind of thing we can expect in this place, I submit to you, sir, that we have some dark days ahead in this House. We should be conducting our business out of a position of respect, not ascribing motive to other members and particularly the base kind of accusations that we heard in the House today.

Speaker, I ask you to assume your role as Speaker and rule accordingly.

1140

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On the same point of order, government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I rise just to give the context of what we're talking about today. The member for Etobicoke Centre and the Minister of Education had an exchange today as part of a government question related to a piece of legislation which is before the House. During the course of their exchange, they made reference to the fact that members of the official opposition had sponsored a press conference this morning and had attended that press conference. We just heard from the honourable member that that is the statement of fact and—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It was very quiet when both points of orders from the opposition were presented. I am asking for no interjections from this moment on. They are providing comment on the same point of order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, in the course of the exchange, in the course of the debate that goes on in the Legislature, reference was made about a press conference that was held this morning, the fact that it was sponsored by members of the opposition and that some of those members were present, and the contents of that press conference.

As we know, there is a cut and thrust here in the Legislature in terms of debate. Facts were put on the table. The honourable members don't like those facts. That's part of the cut and thrust of question period. We're dealing with facts which the member just confirmed happened: the fact that the press conference was sponsored and that they attended.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same point of order?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm not sure I can put it any more eloquently than what my colleagues have said, the member for

Newmarket–Aurora and the member for Nepean–Carleton. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, and I say through you to the House leader, to the member for Etobicoke Centre, to the Minister of Education and to all members of the Liberal caucus: That's despicable, what you did today. It clearly was a set-up from the beginning. It is unfortunate that it has become—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Address the Speaker, please.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** It is unfortunate that it has become a policy here that we are not allowed to interrupt question period. You clearly violated the rights of this House, of democracy, of freedom of speech. It was a set-up from the beginning. Mr. Speaker, I would ask in the future that you rule early on when you see that it's a set-up. You don't have to have earmuffs on to not see what was coming.

The fact of the matter is, the honourable members are quite correct in stating that standing order 23 says, "In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she"—and they cite four subsections; I'll cite two—"Makes allegations against another member," clearly allegations were made against another member, and "Uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder." Clearly disorder was created, and clearly what you said was very unfair.

As I said, I don't think I've seen anything as bad in 21 years here. It's certainly below you as an honourable member of this Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Through the Chair, please.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I found it shocking that you allow your colleagues to set you up for such low demeanour.

Mr. Speaker, if you're unable to rule against the member for some other reason, I think the honourable member at the very least—both honourable members, the member for Etobicoke Centre and the Minister of Education—should do the honourable thing and apologize to my colleagues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same point of order?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I rise on the point of order that I had indicated the event was sponsored by the member from Newmarket–Aurora and that two other members attended. I then went on to attribute the comments that were made around radical engineering to Charles McVety, so I did not indicate, if you read Hansard to the extent—fair enough; I appreciate the point.

For me, I stand by the fact that we have a responsibility, when we introduce a piece of legislation, to be prepared to work with another group to move that legislation forward in a way that benefits the people of Ontario and, in particular, the students, who do suffer extraordinary discrimination based on gender identification.

So for me, it is very disturbing. I appreciate, and I'm thrilled, that the members opposite here are so angry, as I am, that someone had the audacity to stand in a press



conference and speak about radical gender engineering. So I'm thrilled, and I stand by my comments.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Newmarket–Aurora on the same point of order.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, Hansard will tell us precisely what was said. The reason for our reaction to what both the member from Etobicoke Centre as well as the education minister said today is that they not only implied, they expressly stated, that we endorse the positions that were discussed at that press conference.

The transcript of that media conference will also confirm that when the individuals were asked if they had the support of any MPPs in this House for their position, the express response was, "No." They indicated very clearly that they were here to express their views and their concerns on a piece of legislation.

I say again, if it gets to the point where people are intimidated for expressing their views in this place, whether it is a member of the House or a member of the public in our media conference, it's a sad day in this Legislature. Let it not happen, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. One moment please.

I'm prepared to rule on the points of order. I do want to remind all members that I'm still a little bit of a rookie, but I will admit to my foible, and that was I was not quick enough to stand when I should have. I apologize to the members in this House for my mistake. I honestly believed as it was happening—I had that instinct to jump, but I wanted to make sure that I was making the right choice. I will not second-guess myself from here on in, and I apologize to all members.

However, I also want to remind all members that I'm suspicious that this would not have happened if we continued to keep our questions and our answers on the government, of the administration of the responsibility of the government, which I did remind you right off the bat. So they should not seek opinions on any other policies or procedures or actions of other parties. Nor should they reflect the character or the conduct of any member. I have heard some of the heckling that is referring to individuals and that is not helpful.

We are trying to set a tone, and I appreciate the comments that were made. I would also ask that all members be cognizant of that particular guideline within our own rules. If it stays there, we would probably avoid this point of order.

I believe there are no deferred votes, so this House stands adjourned until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1149 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize a number of guests who are here for the introduction of my private member's bill, the Hawkins Gignac Act, later this afternoon.

In the gallery today are John Gignac, who tragically lost his niece and her family to carbon monoxide poisoning; Andy Glynn from the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, which recently passed a resolution supporting requiring detectors in all homes; Matthew Jackson from Enbridge; Carol Heller and Marie-Claude Lavigueur from Kidde Canada Ltd.; Daniel Langlois, Canadian Standards Association; and Pat Folliott, Mary Ellen Sheppard and Chuck Rachlis, who have all been very supportive and helped to raise awareness about the need for carbon monoxide detectors in the home. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park and thank them for being here in support of such a worthwhile project.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. We welcome our guests. Thank you for being here.

Introduction of guests?

The Speaker has some guests. With us today in the Speaker's gallery is a delegation comprised of senators and representatives from the Missouri General Assembly: Senator Tim Green, Senator Brian Munzlinger, Representative T.J. Berry, Representative Casey Guernsey, Representative Jason Holsman, Representative Thomas Long, Representative Mike McGhee, Representative Genise Montecillo and Representative Clem Smith. How do we welcome our guests?

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** They did ask me some interesting questions, and I was very neutral in my response.

It is now time for members' statements.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FOOD SAFETY

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Mississippi—no.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It has nothing to do with Missouri.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** This statement concerns a man's constitutional right to choose the food he wants to eat. In November 2009, Mark Tijssen was charged under four different sections of the Food Safety and Quality Act because he bought a local pig and slaughtered it to feed his family.

A Ministry of Natural Resources enforcement officer sat in a neighbour's tree stand for five days watching Mark and his children in their home with night vision goggles. The MNR then raided Mark's home with six squad cars with flashing lights.

The maximum fine was \$100,000, but Mark was told that it would be reduced to \$1,000, if he pleaded guilty. But Mark didn't do anything wrong and he decided to

fight the charges in court. Mark Tijssen acted as his own attorney, arguing that he had a constitutional right to choose the food he wants to eat.

Today, the MNR delivered a letter to Mark Tijssen, stating that they will drop all charges after two years of numerous court appearances.

This is a constitutional victory and vindication for Mark Tijssen, a man who had the strength and courage to stand up against a wrongful government action and to fight for the principle of what was right. Mark Tijssen is a great Canadian. Thank you.

### NEIGHBOUR TO NEIGHBOUR FOOD BANK

**Miss Monique Taylor:** This Saturday afternoon, I will be opening my constituency office with the residents of Hamilton Mountain. This open house will take place from 1 till 3 this Saturday afternoon at our location at 952 Concession Street at Upper Gage. People can take a break from their Christmas shopping and come and spend some time with us with some refreshments, light snacks and a little holiday cheer.

We are asking that people bring with them a non-perishable food item to donate to the Neighbour to Neighbour food bank that is located in my riding. They provide many services to the residents of Hamilton Mountain, and with the holiday season right around the corner, there's a great need in our community.

In addition to being a food bank, this wonderful organization offers a number of other services. They have children's tutoring programs, they provide one-on-one support for local schoolchildren, they provide resource counsellors to help women fighting violence, they connect with residents in need with various services available in the community, and they work in partnership to support many other valuable programs.

Neighbour to Neighbour services over 1,000 residents in the area with the help of over 100 dedicated volunteers. I would like to thank them all very much for the great work that they do in making our community a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take a quick moment and wish all of the residents of Hamilton Mountain a very happy holiday—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

### ETOBICOKE GENERAL HOSPITAL

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** Monsieur le Président, je veux vous informer des développements extraordinaires dans ma circonscription d'Etobicoke nord.

I rise today to announce an extraordinary development in my own riding of Etobicoke North: a \$200-million grant of funding to Etobicoke General Hospital for a magnificent expansion.

Etobicoke General Hospital has been a hub of excellent medical care for more than four decades. Something in the order of about 200,000 residents in all of Etobi-

coke, not merely Etobicoke North, are very well served. We have something like 50,000 outpatients annually, 15,000 inpatients, about 65,000 emergency room visits and, of course, the statistics go on.

This particular expansion, this grant of \$200 million, will allow the existing facility to have a new emergency department, a new critical care unit, new intensive care units and a whole host of other facilities. If you have a tour of the actual facility, Speaker, you too will be impressed. It's something on the order of a one-acre expansion on four storeys. As I say, it's going to be the jewel in the crown of Etobicoke North.

I'd like to thank the many, many individuals, not only the Minister of Health, the government of Ontario, the various bureaucrats and the various ministries that have been part of this extraordinary development. I invite all members of the Legislature to the opening.

### PAN AM GAMES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** Speaker, I'd first like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker. I can already see that you have some challenges in front of you, and I wish you the very best of luck.

Recently, our Canadian athletes were very successful in the Pan Am Games, capturing 119 medals for fifth place in the overall medal race. I especially want to congratulate two of the participants from my riding and my hometown, attending Char-Lan high school in Williams-town.

While I don't want to take credit for their abilities, I had the privilege of watching them grow up and coaching them both. Christina Julien is a member of our women's gold medal soccer team, one of six players to score two goals during the tournament. Michael Robertson, a member of the Canada 4-by-400-metre relay team, finished fifth in the finals.

My riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry is very proud of yet another of their many great achievements. Mr. Speaker, we have many great young kids across this province who are making a difference today and will be our leaders tomorrow.

### CAT SCAN CHRISTMAS CONCERT

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On Saturday evening I had the pleasure to attend the CAT Scan Christmas concert at the Cobalt Classic Theatre. The entertainment was top-notch.

The purpose of the eighth annual concert is what sets it apart. Eight years ago, residents in my area had to travel four hours for a CT scan. The Timiskaming hospital had the capital to purchase a scanner, but the Ministry of Health would not approve the funding to operate it. So in true northern fashion, a committee was struck, a foundation was created and, three years later, the goal of \$2.3 million was reached. The CT scanner is now self-sustaining. Special thanks to the Frog's Breath Founda-



tion, Peter Grant, Three H manufacturing and many others.

1510

The result: 18,500 CT scans, 740,000 less kilometres on northern roads, and happier, healthier people.

Although this effort required the dedication of many, one couple deserves special recognition. Judy and Dr. P.J. Pace have and continue to be a driving force behind this incredible achievement.

#### SHERIDAN COLLEGE

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** This past week, on November 30, I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of Sheridan College's Hazel McCallion campus in Mississauga. This state-of-the-art campus is designed and built to LEED gold standard, which is a rarity for post-secondary institutions.

The current capacity of this campus is 1,760 full-time students. This campus offers a range of programs such as accounting, finance, human resources, marketing, banking and wealth management. Our government's investment in the first phase amounted to \$31 million. The second phase of the campus is ready to move forward. Our government has committed to contribute \$60 million to increase its capacity to handle an additional 3,500 students.

This campus will benefit our youth, adults, seniors and newcomers and will create jobs in Mississauga. This is great news for Mississauga.

I would like to congratulate the current president of Sheridan, Dr. Zabudsky; former president Dr. Rob Turner; our mayor, Hazel McCallion; Team Sheridan; and all the residents of Mississauga.

#### MAGIC OF THE SEASON

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** I'd like to extend congratulations to the children's aid society of Simcoe county foundation for their annual auction. This year, Magic of the Season raised over \$75,000 to support foster children with their post-secondary studies. The event was a huge success and brought many members of the community out to support the cause.

My wife, Joanne, and I co-chaired the festivities, and the talented Mr. Peter Biffis and Jeff Walters were the MC and auctioneer. Jane Kovarikova—my own legislative assistant—and Jeff Draper shared about the role of education in their lives as former youths in care. More than 200 people from Barrie and area came out to support the academic dreams of prospective students.

The night was kicked off by a generous \$25,000 endowment from Georgian College that would fully fund a foster child through their program of choice at the college. Thanks to Brian Tamblyn, the Georgian College president, for making this historic, powerful gesture. Thanks also to Susan Carmichael and Kimberly Carson with the children's aid society for organizing this major event.

Magic of the Season has represented something more than just a fundraiser. For the youth who will go on to study, it meant the possibility to realize their academic goals, to imagine a future that they direct, and to start a life as young adults with opportunities equal to their peers'. For these kids, the right to education is not just a right unto itself but in fact a right to equal opportunity.

Thank you again to everyone who keeps the foundation thriving from year to year and to all the people who came together to make the event the success that it was.

#### L'AMOREAUX COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Today I would like to acknowledge the students and staff at L'Amoreaux Collegiate Institute for hosting the launch of the partnership between the Toronto District School Board and the Stephen Lewis Foundation on World AIDS Day.

Over 33 million people in the world live with HIV, with most residing in sub-Saharan Africa, one of the poorest regions in the world. Through this partnership, the Toronto District School Board will be able to work with the Stephen Lewis Foundation to develop a curriculum resource and provide opportunities for students to learn about the impacts of HIV/AIDS.

This partnership was launched at L'Amoreaux Collegiate because the students at this school have been leaders in raising awareness on the AIDS epidemic. In the past, students have initiated ribbon campaigns. This year, students have designed a World AIDS Day T-shirt to raise funds for the Stephen Lewis Foundation, which supports the front-line organizations in Africa combating the epidemic.

Recent numbers show that the incidence of HIV declined in 2010, yet much work needs to be done to reach the target goal of zero new infections. I am very proud that students in my riding at L'Amoreaux Collegiate are working very hard to do their part to make sure this goal becomes a reality.

#### PENSION PLANS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My statement is directed to the Minister of Finance, and it concerns the transfer of pension assets for roughly 10,000 public sector employees affected by past divestments. Many of these employees are paramedics.

The Pension Benefits Amendment Act was supposed to fix the problem that arose when the government divested a wide array of services from one level of government to another in the mid-1990s. The government's own Expert Commission on Pensions highlighted the fact that many of these 10,000 employees continued to do the same job and in the same place of employment, but they were told that their future pension accruals would be in a different pension plan. This meant that their pension benefits would be significantly lower than they would have been if all of their service credits and associated pension assets had been transferred to their new plan.

To fix this unfair practice, the commission recommended in 2008 that the government should “promptly address the pension arrangements for groups of public service employees affected by past divestments and transfers.”

Three years after being told to promptly address the matter and 17 months after this House passed enabling legislation, the government has yet to introduce the regulations to fix this problem. The Minister of Finance told me in question period on March 30: “Those regulations will be promulgated shortly.” It has now been over eight months since the minister made those comments.

This holdup is affecting real people, many of whom live in my riding and all of whom are desperately trying to make plans to support their families in retirement. They can't wait any longer.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENT INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION DES LOYERS)

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'll reserve my statement for ministers' statements.

### HAWKINS GIGNAC ACT (CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS), 2011

#### LOI HAWKINS GIGNAC DE 2011 (DÉTECTEURS DE MONOXYDE DE CARBONE)

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 to require carbon monoxide detectors in certain residential buildings / Projet de loi 20, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment pour exiger

l'installation de détecteurs de monoxyde de carbone dans certains immeubles d'habitation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** This bill amends the Building Code Act, 1992, to require owners of residential buildings that contain a fuel-burning device or a storage garage to install carbon monoxide detectors in the building and to maintain them in operating condition. Currently, detectors are only required in homes built after August 6, 2001. The bill will also make it illegal to decommission a detector in the home.

The short title of the bill is the Hawkins Gignac Act, after a family from my riding of Oxford that was tragically killed due to carbon monoxide poisoning.

### PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE AND ELDERLY PEOPLE FROM ABUSE ACT (POWERS OF ATTORNEY), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES CONTRE LES MAUVAIS TRAITEMENTS (PROCURATIONS)

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney / Projet de loi 21, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur la prise de décisions au nom d'autrui en ce qui a trait aux procurations.

1520

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. O'Toole moves that leave be given to introduce a bill entitled An Act to create the Twenty-First Century Skills Award for school pupils and that it now be read for the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** This is a bill entitled An Act to create the Twenty-First Century Skills Award for school pupils. First reading of the bill, première lecture, projet de loi.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bill, of which I gave all copies to the table, does provide a framework for the establishment of a group here—there's been a slight mistake. I gave you the wrong bill. I have so many of them here to do. Actually, here it is here.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** How can you read the wrong one? You read the wrong one, then, Speaker.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no. Stop the clock, because I'm taking way too much time.

*Interjection.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will re-put the question. Mr. O'Toole moves—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I have too many one liners. I can't use them.

Mr. O'Toole moves that leave be given to introduce a bill entitled An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to the powers of attorney and that it now be read for the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a very short statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you for the brief accommodation. The act amends the Public Guardian and Trustee Act to maintain a registry of those persons who are powers of attorney in the Substitute Decisions Act. This moves to protect frail elderly people who may be taken advantage of.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you very much. Further bills?

#### ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA FUITE FACE À LA VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 22, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to domestic violence / Projet de loi 22, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation à l'égard de la violence familiale.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I am pleased to table the Escaping Domestic Violence Act on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, to shorten the period of notice required to terminate a tenancy in cases where the tenant or a dependent child of the tenant is a victim of domestic violence.

#### PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE AGAINST PICKETING ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 VISANT À PROTÉGER LES GENS VULNÉRABLES CONTRE LE PIQUETAGE

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to prevent picketing of supported group living residences / Projet de loi 23, Loi visant à empêcher le piquetage devant les résidences de groupe avec services de soutien.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My private member's bill is aimed at protecting the dignity of some of our province's most vulnerable people. Currently, in the event of a labour dispute, striking staff may picket at homes of supportive living residents. My bill would ensure that the homes of supported individuals cannot be picketed during times of labour dispute.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS IN AMATEUR SPORTS ACT, 2011 LOI DE 2011 SUR LA PROTECTION DES MINEURS PARTICIPANT À DES SPORTS AMATEURS

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to provide protection for minors participating in amateur sports / Projet de loi 24, Loi visant à protéger les mineurs qui participent à des sports amateurs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Essentially, what this bill is designed to do is require background checks for all those individuals working with youth in the province of Ontario to ensure that those individuals are essentially the ones that should be around kids.

#### TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT (PUBLIC TRANSIT EXPENSE TAX CREDIT), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS (CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR DÉPENSES DE TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN)

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit for expenses incurred in using public transit / Projet de loi 25, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts afin de prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les dépenses engagées au titre des transports en commun.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I encourage the government to implement this bill to issue a non-refundable tax credit

for expenses incurred in the purchase of public transit and that they, by regulation, be given a tax credit when using public transit.

## TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SKILLS AWARD ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE PRIX COMPÉTENCES POUR LE 21<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to create the Twenty-First Century Skills Award for school pupils / Projet de loi 26, Loi créant le Prix Compétences pour le 21<sup>e</sup> siècle pour les élèves.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The bill allows the Minister of Education to confer an award known as the Twenty-First Century Skills Award to one or more elementary school pupils and secondary school pupils, as well as their teachers, for implementing a set of skills that is recognized around the world as leadership skills.

## MOTIONS

**Hon. John Milloy:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding the membership of standing committees and that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You're seeking unanimous consent to move a motion. Is there unanimous consent to move the motion?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I heard some noes.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. John Milloy:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Agreed? Agreed.  
Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 10, 13, 14 and 15 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it agreed that the motion carry as is? Agreed? Agreed.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There being no further motions, it is now time for statements by ministries.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### RENT REGULATION

### RÉGLEMENTATION DES LOYERS

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I rise today in support of legislation to keep rental housing costs affordable and stable for tenants, both families and individuals, in Ontario.

Le 22 novembre, le Canada a célébré la Journée nationale de l'habitation. Cette journée nous rappelle, à toutes et à tous, de prendre conscience de l'importance du logement abordable et d'y réfléchir.

On November 22, Canada marked National Housing Day as a reminder for all of us to recognize and reflect on the importance of affordable housing. We know that access to affordable housing is crucial to breaking the cycle of poverty, that access to affordable housing means that students will do better at school and that people will be healthier.

C'est la raison pour laquelle nous prenons des mesures aujourd'hui pour stabiliser le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.

That's why today we're taking action to stabilize the rent increase guideline.

Under the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, the current formula for setting the annual rent increase guideline is based on the consumer price index, the CPI, which is calculated by Statistics Canada.

1530

For the most part, that has worked well for tenants and for landlords. The CPI is a fair and transparent way to calculate the guideline. However, last summer the average Ontario CPI over the previous 12 months was 3.1%. More than a 3% increase in rent is a significant hit for families and individuals struggling in these challenging economic times.

Monsieur le Président, plus tôt au cours de l'automne, le premier ministre s'est engagé à modifier la loi pour que l'augmentation tienne compte de la situation des locataires et pour qu'elle tienne compte de ce qui se produit dans la vraie vie pour les locataires.

Earlier this fall, the Premier committed to fixing the legislation so that the increase would be in line with what's happening for those who rent and in line for what's happening in the real world for tenants.

What is happening in the real world is best documented in a study that the United Way of Toronto released last January. The study, entitled Vertical Poverty, demonstrates the squeeze on incomes and rents for lower-income tenants. Almost half of the tenants interviewed for the United Way study said that they worry about paying the rent every month. One out of four tenants said that they do without things they need every month in order to pay the rent.



Monsieur le Président, nous avons pris un engagement et nous agissons maintenant rapidement pour modifier le mode de calcul du taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.

Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment, and now we're moving quickly on changes to the way the rent increase guideline is calculated.

The proposed amendment we are introducing today would ensure that, beginning in 2013, the rent increase guideline would be more stable and predictable. It would never go below 1% and would never be higher than two and a half per cent. We're also proposing that this formula be reviewed every four years to take into account the current situation at those times. The annual rent increase guideline will continue to be based on the consumer price index, which, as I've said, is a fair and transparent way to calculate the guideline.

Cette méthode permettrait de veiller à ce que les loyers restent abordables, réduirait la volatilité et accorderait une sécurité aux locataires et un rendement du capital investi aux locateurs pour qu'ils puissent entretenir comme il se doit leurs biens locatifs.

This approach would ensure that rents are affordable, would reduce volatility and provide certainty for tenants, while giving landlords a fair return so they can properly maintain their rental properties. By stabilizing the rent increase guideline, we'll help people find certainty in their housing costs, allowing them to focus on their jobs or education.

This amendment would fulfill an important goal of the government's poverty reduction strategy, and that is to keep housing costs affordable and stable. This proposed new rent increase guideline, along with other government programs, supports that principle.

Just a year ago, in fact, our government introduced the long-term affordable housing strategy, which is the first ever of its kind in Ontario, designed to make it easier for families and individuals to find and maintain affordable housing. That proposed legislation supports our strategy by giving families greater access to a range of affordable housing options.

Nous transformons le système de logement abordable pour qu'il mette directement l'accent sur les besoins de la population en reconnaissant que les collectivités ont des besoins différents en matière de logement.

We're transforming the affordable housing system to focus directly on the needs of people by recognizing that communities have different housing needs, depending on where they're located in the province.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that housing is a basic need. Our government is committed to helping Ontario residents find safe, healthy, affordable places to call home. I look forward to the debate on this legislation, I look forward to input from across the House and I urge all members to support this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Response?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to rise on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus to respond to the

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing's introduction of her bill today to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006.

I have to tell you, I'm not so much disappointed by what this bill does as what it doesn't do. Frankly, Speaker, if you read it and look at the history of rent increases in this province over the last decade, you'll see that it won't change anything.

What I am disappointed about, however, is the fact this minister and this government believe that this piece of legislation is the priority right now. How can that be, Mr. Speaker, when it doesn't address some of the very serious issues that are facing both landlords and tenants across the province at the moment? If you gathered a few hundred of them together in a room, I'd be shocked if the way that this bill has been written in its present form seriously addresses some of those issues.

The bill will do nothing, Speaker, with all due respect, to create more affordable housing spaces. It will do nothing to assist local municipalities in coping with the mounting costs of operating their existing stock of affordable housing. Neither will it assist in opening up new rental units or encouraging landlords grappling with the crippling effect of the HST and the skyrocketing hydro and heating costs to stay in the business of renting out residential units.

The reality right now in Ontario is that landlords—it's a money-losing position, with costs of operating the units rising up to 6% every year. The bottom line is that despite the minister's best efforts to convince tenants that she's on their side, this bill will absolutely do nothing in terms of rent increases in Ontario because you have to look at the last decade. The average rate increase in Ontario was 2.1%, and over the past five the average increase was 1.7%. Those were the minister's own statistics this morning at our Coles Notes briefing on this bill. So you can see that over the last five and 10 years those increases have fallen between the floor and ceiling that she's proposing by this bill today.

But there's simply, I suggest, no pressing need for this legislation. So what's the point?

Well, Speaker, this bill was introduced today by the minister as her response to the one-year anomaly that we saw with rent increases going from 0.7% this year and the 3.1% increase for next year. Obviously, let's face it, that infuriated tenants' groups. They were mad at the government and this is their response. What the minister didn't tell you or those groups is the real reason why the rent increase guideline jumped so dramatically from one year to the next, but I know you're interested. I'll explain it to you.

The guideline, as the minister noted, is based on the Ontario consumer price index, and we all know it's this minister and the government's policies that caused the cost of living in Ontario to soar. The rent increase guideline has just spiked up with it. I had to chuckle during the briefing this morning when it was mentioned that it was a recent economic instability that caused the



CPI to soar, which resulted in the fluctuation of the guideline. Economic mismanagement—indeed, economic incompetence—would be a more accurate description, although I can see why the ministry chose to use the word “instability.” I can understand why they wanted to use that word. The “economic instability,” as it was so delicately put to me this morning, Mr. Speaker, I suggest is directly attributable to the McGuinty government’s decision to force the HST on Ontarians.

I have to give credit, though, to my predecessor in my capacity as the PC municipal affairs critic, the former member for Burlington, Joyce Savoline. She repeatedly warned the government that Ontario’s rental housing stock was deteriorating as a result of the implementation of the HST. She warned your government, your minister and your Premier, and you know what the response was? Have the landlords “absorb the cost of the HST.” That member was right, Mr. Speaker.

The bill this government introduced today is also a result of this government’s blind pursuit of costly energy experiments with complete disregard to the impact on hydro rates. If this government wants to do something to help landlords and tenants in Ontario, it can start by making the member for Algoma-Manitoulin’s Bill 4—bring it back here. It was approved by the majority of this House. Bring it back for third reading and that will help landlords and tenants in the province of Ontario.

Then after that, I suggest that you act on the Auditor General’s scathing report and end the feed-in tariff program that’s making electricity a luxury item in the province of Ontario. Stop making tenants absorb the cost of this government’s unbelievable policy of paying 20 times the going rate for power. That’s my suggestion to you, Minister, and I know deep down you agree.

Those are some of the real steps that we on this side of the House, that Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC Party are calling for today to provide real relief for families, landlords and tenants.

1540

Unfortunately, this bill is yet another sign that this McGuinty government has lost its way and is out of touch with landlords and tenants in the province of Ontario.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I rise on behalf of Andrea Horwath and the NDP caucus this afternoon. Action is needed to address the crisis in affordable housing across this province: 600,000 households live in overcrowded, substandard and unaffordable housing. One in five Ontario tenants pays more than half their income on rent.

According to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, 150,000 households are waiting for affordable housing, which is an increase of 7.5% over last year, and some families, like in Toronto, are waiting as long as 20 years.

The high cost of rent is the reason that 250,000 tenants used food banks in the last year. The government is not doing enough to address this crisis. It’s reducing the funding for affordable housing. According to the fall economic update, affordable homes and repairs has fallen

over 90%—a decrease of 90% over the last year, and the government plans to only build 1,000 new affordable houses over the next three years.

We will look carefully at the bill to determine the extent to which it will actually assist tenants, but on first look, it’s very limited; it’s a very narrow measure. It may reduce the fluctuations, but it isn’t clear that it will make rent more affordable for tenants. In fact, by continuing to link the annual rent increase guidelines to the CPI, it allows higher rent increases just when tenants are being hit with higher hydro, higher gas and higher food costs.

It also doesn’t fix the problems with rent controls. It doesn’t close the loophole in rent control that allowed landlords to propose exorbitant rent increases on tenants in the vacant units. It doesn’t protect the tenants from the guideline increases for utility costs. And it doesn’t establish a landlord licensing program to crack down on negligent landlords, to fix the issue of bedbugs and cockroaches in rental units across this city and in other parts of the province.

Housing groups have called for these and other reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act, which I’m sure we’ll hear about as this bill moves through the committee. My colleague from Parkdale-High Park introduced a private member’s bill earlier this year which included these and other measures. Unfortunately, that bill did not become law. So we need to be working together to make sure that this government bill makes the substantive changes needed to make rent more affordable and to better protect the rights of tenants in Ontario, because Ontarians deserve no less.

In my own area of Niagara, The Hope Centre in the city of Welland supported about 700 individuals in 2009, allowing them to be able to retain their housing—so just in one city in my riding, 700 tenants. Open Door Concepts, which I spoke about in my member’s statement last week or the week before, supported 40 individuals, to help retain them in their housing. The emergency hostel service in my riding, called The Hope House, provided 6,623 nights of beds and safety for residents in the city of Welland and across the Niagara region.

The wait-list here in the Niagara peninsula—although it may be up to 20 years in Toronto—can be as high as four to seven years in the region of Niagara.

In the city of Welland: 27% of the population in my city actually rents, and so this bill certainly won’t assist them in paying 50% of their income towards rent. The median income in Welland after taxes is only \$22,920. If people have to pay \$10,000 of their income towards rent, there is a problem with feeding families and looking after your children.

The percentage of the population that lives in low income in the city of Welland is 10.2%, so there are a lot of people who need a lot more measures than this bill is going to give them, but I look forward to some further debate on the issue. I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the minister for her statement and the members for their responses.



NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE  
AND ACTION ON  
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
JOURNÉE NATIONALE  
DE COMMÉMORATION ET D'ACTION  
CONTRE LA VIOLENCE  
FAITE AUX FEMMES

**Hon. John Milloy:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe that we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allocated to each party to speak in recognition of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, after which the House will observe a moment of silence.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Minister of Education and Women's Issues.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Today, on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, we honour the 14 female engineering students whose lives were tragically cut short at École Polytechnique de Montréal.

We must never forget that the horrible events of December 6, 1989, were caused by gender discrimination. The acts of that day, 22 years ago, are a stark reminder of one terrible fact: Women are at risk of violence simply because they are women.

Monsieur le Président, j'avais à peu près le même âge que ces femmes lorsqu'elles sont mortes. Cette tragédie nous a changés en tant que génération, en tant que femmes et en tant que société.

Mr. Speaker, I was about the same age as these women when they died. This tragedy changed us as a generation, as women and as a society. This tragedy pointed then and still does to the inequality that is at the root of violence against women. Whether it is the sexual exploitation of women through human trafficking or the high number of missing and murdered aboriginal women across Canada, we see that inequality in all of its forms reinforces violence against women.

The rose button we wear today signifies a commitment to never condone or remain silent about violence against women. It is a symbol that we will continue to work to eliminate the gap in equality between men and women.

Le bouton de rose que nous portons aujourd'hui témoigne de notre engagement à ne jamais approuver ou rester silencieux quand il est question de violence à l'égard des femmes.

We can make a difference as individuals; it starts with each of us asking ourselves, "What can I do?" Equality grows with each of our efforts. Let's teach our boys and girls to value each other as equals and to demonstrate respect. As adults, we can lead by example. As minister responsible for women's issues, I am working to ensure that women live without fear of violence at home, at work or in their communities, and I was proud to work with our partners to develop the sexual violence action plan.

Speaker, one third of women are victims of sexual violence. That is a startling figure. In most cases, the woman is acquainted with her attacker. The sexual violence action plan is working to improve services for victims of sexual violence and to help them heal.

As Minister of Education, I'm proud that we've recently introduced the Accepting Schools Act to make Ontario schools inclusive places where all kids feel safe, welcome and respected.

Speaker, almost 30% of high school girls report unwanted sexual attention, and we know that kids can't learn when they don't feel safe. Our goal has to be nothing short of ending violence against women and of ending the fundamental inequality at the heart of gender discrimination.

As leaders, we can ensure that all girls have equal access to all benefits of society: to grow up, to go to school and reach their potential. We can ensure that all girls in this province have the opportunity to learn in an environment where they are safe and respected.

As a woman who felt the tragedy at École Polytechnique de Montréal so personally, I want to ensure that this date is always remembered and always serves to mobilize us. Change happens, one person at a time, and each of us has a role.

Mr. Speaker, November 25 was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. We wore a white ribbon to recognize the role men can play in ending violence against women. The day began the internationally sanctioned 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, which continues through to December 10.

Today, on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, I ask all members to join. By wearing this rose, we remember the women whose lives have been cut short by violence, including those who died in Montreal on December 6, 1989, and we remember women everywhere who suffer, often in silence, from abuse just because they are women.

1550

Mr. Speaker, let us take a moment to remember the 14 women who tragically lost their lives 22 years ago: Geneviève Bergeron, age 21; Hélène Colgan, age 23; Nathalie Croteau, age 23; Barbara Daigneault, age 22; Anne-Marie Edward, age 21; Maud Haviernick, age 29; Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, age 31; Maryse Laganière, age 25; Maryse Leclair, age 23; Anne-Marie Lemay, age 27; Sonia Pelletier, age 23; Michèle Richard, age 21; Annie St-Arneault, age 23; and Annie Turcotte, age 21.

Souvenons-nous de leur famille et de leurs amis. Souvenons-nous des personnes qui connaissent le mieux leur sourire et leur rire. Et souvenons-nous des personnes qu'elles aimaient et qui ressentent tous les jours leur disparition.

Let us remember their families and friends. Let's remember those who knew their smiles and their laughter best, and let's remember those who knew their love and still feel their loss every single day.



**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and the PC caucus on this, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

It was on this day in 1989 that a lone gunman killed 14 young women and wounded 14 others at Montreal's École Polytechnique. He separated male and female students and ordered male students and teachers out of the room. He then proclaimed his hatred for feminists, whom he claimed had ruined his life.

These women weren't militant feminists; they were intelligent young women who were advancing their education in order to become professional engineers. They were targeted because of the sole fact they were the wrong gender. This single event, which is known around the world as the Montreal massacre, did more to raise the awareness across Canada of the tragedy and senselessness of violence against women than any other event to date. Memorials have been erected across the country and the anniversary is commemorated each year in the media, schools, governments, private organizations, and by countless individuals who shared the pain of that day.

In my own riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, a vigil was held this morning on the Lindsay campus of Fleming College. This event also served as the opportunity for the presentation by the YWCA of Guardian Angel Awards to the women in the community who provide invaluable assistance to women in crisis.

Every day we watch news reports of honour killings, depressed husbands who kill their spouses, boyfriends attacking girlfriends, and on and on. There is a mountain of evidence showing that if a young male grows up in a family environment where women are disrespected and abused, odds are that he will develop similar views towards women as he matures, yet every second a woman somewhere in Canada experiences some form of sexual violence. Over 86% of all criminal sexual assaults in Canada are against women. Over 29% of Canadian women have been assaulted by a spouse, with 45% suffering serious physical injury. Worst of all, sexual assaults usually occur at the hands of someone in a position of trust. When you look at statistics like that, how can we claim that we are truly an advanced civilization?

The problem of violence against women can be compounded in non-urban areas where isolation and transportation can worsen the situation. However, many communities are coming together to fight this problem. The YWCA in Haliburton county, for example, provides both short- and long-term counselling, as well as temporary emergency accommodation for women in abusive situations. Women's Resources in the city of Kawartha Lakes also provides counselling and public education programs, including the growing risks associated with technology and Internet safety. Cellphones with a built-in GPS can be a blessing but can also make some women who are fleeing an abusive spouse more vulnerable.

The city of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton county are collaborating with many community agencies on the

development of a poverty reduction strategy to deal with some of the underlying social problems that put women at risk.

As a nurse, I know that we need to treat the fundamental underlying causes of a disease and not just the symptoms. You can treat a patient for a heart attack, but you need to address all of the other factors that contributed to it: blood pressure, cholesterol, diet, exercise, obesity. Dealing with a societal disease is no different. Certainly, perpetrators of violence against women should be punished, and the victims need to be taken care of and their needs addressed.

However, this is addressing the problem after the fact. We need to do more to stop the violence in the first place. We cannot turn a blind eye when we see female friends, relatives, associates or co-workers being victimized. Men need to be role models for their sons in terms of respect for women and intolerance to violence. It is worth noting that the White Ribbon Campaign was actually started by a group of men in London, Ontario. The cause of ending domestic violence and sexual violence needs to be embraced by all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the PC caucus to mark this solemn occasion.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Parkdale-High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** You know that horrible, horrible day when Marc Lépine walked into that engineering school and opened fire on women in 1989, he used words to the effect of "You're all a bunch of feminists." Mr. Speaker, I've always been a feminist since I can remember, and I'm proud to stand on behalf of New Democrats, who are a bunch of feminists, and our leader, Andrea Horwath—also a feminist—to speak about this awful day and what we can do to make sure it's never repeated.

It's interesting that 1989 was exactly 60 years after women were first declared human persons in this country. Any woman here whose mother was born before that would be the first woman in their family to be considered a human person. Before that date, they were the property of their husband or their fathers, property, not persons before that date—60 years later.

I remember the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. These were struggles, for example, against want ads in the Toronto papers that used to say, "Help wanted, male," "Help wanted, female." They were struggles against women getting fired because they were pregnant—again, common practice. They were struggles to get the word "sex" into the Ontario Human Rights Code. We're struggling again now to get gender identity into that same Ontario Human Rights Code on behalf of our trans sisters—struggles continue, 60 years of struggles around women's issues.

On that day, what Marc Lépine in essence said was that this was a threat to him. It was a threat to him, women's equality.

Looking forward to the next—I hope not 60 years; I hope that this comes a lot quicker—we look at the



struggles that are not complete for women, the struggles that will give women more strength and independence, economic independence, which is what they need to be able to leave abusive situations.

So we look at things like affordable and accessible daycare. We still don't have that in the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker; we're not close to having that. That's something I've been struggling for since the 1960s: free and accessible daycare.

We also need fully funded women's shelters, shelters that don't spend most of their time writing grant proposals but actually spend most of their time looking after the women who come to see them and have enough beds in those shelters to be able to accommodate the women who come to see them.

We need to have a society in Ontario where women do not make only 71 cents for every dollar that a man makes, because if you can't afford to take care of your children and yourself on one salary, then you can't afford to be economically independent, and then you get stuck in abusive situations. Certainly, that's what's happening to women.

Women, by and large, are the measure of poverty in this province and across this country: 60% of our senior women live in poverty—60% of our senior women. Most families that are waiting on those affordable housing lists that you heard about earlier are single-headed families, and they're headed by women. Children are the recipients of that poverty and that tradition of poverty. Again, traditions of abuse are passed on from generation to generation.

Signs of hope in this place: There is a sign of hope. Last Parliament I tabled a motion for an all-women committee to look in particular at the roots of violence against women. I know there have been very encouraging signs in this minority Parliament from all parties that we get together as women, an all-party committee of women to look at women's issues. I think we could get a lot done on that committee, Mr. Speaker, and I know that we're going to move forward with that. I've heard encouraging signs. That's an encouraging sign.

1600

Yes, the White Ribbon Campaign: an encouraging sign, started by our own Jack Layton, I'm proud to say, and other men of like minds. An encouraging sign: Ruth's Daughters, something that was started right here, that looks at faith communities and asks faith communities to take an active role in raising awareness about violence against women.

There are lots of encouraging signs, but there's a long, long way to go. I don't want to wait another 60 years. I don't want to wait for another tragedy, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to wait for another Marc Lépine. I want this done, and done for our children and certainly done for our grandchildren; that's what I want. That's what we want, we bunch of feminists in the NDP, with Andrea Horwath.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As in the motion, it is my request that all members and all guests in the

House please rise for a moment of silence to honour the memory of the victims of the Montreal massacre and their families.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you for that moment. I want to thank all the members for their statements today on that issue.

It is now time for petitions.

## PETITIONS

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built over 200 feet (60 metres) below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source for over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA's potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry."

Mr. Speaker, I will sign this petition. Thank you.

### JOB RELOCATION

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the federal government is moving 10,000 jobs from the downtown of our city of Ottawa to Kanata;

"Whereas about half of those people live in Orléans;

"Whereas the commutes up to these jobs will be over one hour for Orléans commuters, compared to 20 minutes to the present DND offices downtown;

"Whereas this action by the Harper government will make our city less sustainable;

"Whereas Orléans has only 0.5 jobs per household, compared to 1.65 jobs per household in Kanata;

"Whereas this action runs counter to the city of Ottawa's official plan by promoting urban sprawl as opposed to densification;

"Whereas the overall costs of this move of 10,000 jobs to Kanata have never been fully costed;

"Whereas no environmental assessment or consultation was carried out with the affected communities;

“We, the undersigned, petition the assembly of Ontario to request that the Legislature evaluate the actions of the federal government to see if the environmental assessment legislation of the federal and provincial governments was followed; and

“Furthermore, that the Legislature investigate the total cost of a purely political decision by the federal government.”

I will put my signature to this and send it up with Mobarrat.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

### TRANSFERT D’EMPLOIS

**M. Phil McNeely:** « Pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que le gouvernement fédéral transfère 10 000 emplois du centre-ville d’Ottawa vers Kanata;

« Attendu que plus de la moitié de ces employés demeurent à Orléans;

« Attendu que le temps de déplacement vers ces emplois prendra plus d’une heure pour les résidents d’Orléans plutôt que les 20 minutes actuellement nécessaires pour se rendre aux édifices du centre-ville;

« Attendu que cette action du gouvernement Harper fera de notre ville une ville moins viable;

« Attendu qu’Orléans n’a qu’un ratio de 0,5 emploi par foyer, contrairement à 1,65 par foyer à Kanata;

« Attendu que cette décision va à l’encontre du plan officiel de la ville d’Ottawa en prônant l’étalement urbain plutôt que la densification;

« Attendu que les coûts totaux du transfert de ces 10 000 emplois vers Kanata n’ont jamais été évalués;

« Attendu qu’aucune évaluation environnementale ou consultation n’a été faite au sein de la communauté concernée;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que la législature de l’Ontario évalue les actions du gouvernement fédéral pour regarder si l’évaluation environnementale de la législature fédérale et provinciale a été suivie et aussi que la législature provinciale analyse le coût total de cette décision purement politique prise par le gouvernement fédéral. »

Et moi, je vais signer la pétition et l’envoyer avec Carolyn.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The signatures have been gathered by Nichols Gravel Ltd.

Titled, “Nichols Gravel Ltd., Petition for Justice and MNR Compliance to OMB and ARA Legislation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas officials of MNR Aylmer district illegally imposed on licence 103717 without legislative or delegated authority preconditions to be completed prior to operation of the quarry which in fact were impossible to complete without quarry operations, and then used ARA legislation to revoke the licence for non-compliance, when to this date no ‘operational licence’ has yet been delivered to Nichols Gravel Ltd. under direction of OMB order 1194;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“For an order to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Attorney General to comply with OMB Act s. 86(1); Superior Court judgment order 148/07, July 23, 2007; to OMB order 1194; the Aggregate Resources Act; and the June 15, 2006, judicially reviewed declaratory order to attachment (A) as to conditions of licence 103717, to which the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of the Attorney General and Ontario Legislature remain in contempt of court for failure to respond directly to a petition of April 21, 2009 (p. 231), in order to resolve this problem;

“And a further order of request to the RCMP for an investigation of these two ministries for conspiracy, abuse of process, abuse of discretionary authority and negligent misrepresentation to the continued enforcement to revoke licence 103717 based upon preconditions not in the OMB order and not in the licence, and conspired to restrict competition over the past eight years, contrary to the federal Combines Act, s. 45(c).”

Reference: [injusticecanada.com/miscarriageofjustice](http://injusticecanada.com/miscarriageofjustice), series 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

I sign this petition.



### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built over 200 feet ... below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source for over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA's potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry."

1610

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built over 200 feet below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source for over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA's potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry."

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I also support the petition on the Melancthon quarry and I want to add my name to that petition. But yesterday, the Auditor General of Ontario issued a very scathing report—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Petition, please.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This petition has to do with that. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act"—failed—"has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils," including mine, "representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I am pleased to support this, as was moved by our member Todd Smith last week.

### HYDRO DAM

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have more petitions to do with Bala Falls. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government permitted the release of crown lands to enable the development of a hydro dam in the heart of Bala without discussion or proper consultation with the municipality of the township of Muskoka Lakes, the district of Muskoka or the residents and businesses who would be directly affected; and

"Whereas the community is a tourism destination which is dependent on Bala Falls as an attraction; and

"Whereas residents and business people alike are deeply concerned about the economic and environmental impact that the construction and operation of the dam will have on the community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government and in particular the Minister of Natural Resources reverse the decision to release crown lands for a hydro dam in Bala Falls."

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition and affix my signature to it.

### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Energy Farming Ontario Inc., Settlers Landing Wind Park LP and/or Snowy Ridge Wind Park LP are proposing to construct 10 wind turbines within the city of Kawartha Lakes in order to produce up to 20 megawatts of power (the proposed wind parks); and

"Whereas the proposed wind parks will adversely affect wildlife populations, wildlife migration patterns, human health and the natural environment; and

"Whereas the proposed wind parks are to be located, in whole or in part, on the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the location of the proposed wind parks is not in keeping with the Ontario government's vision for the Oak Ridges moraine, which is the protection of the 'ecological features and functions that support the health and well-being of the region's residents and ecosystems';

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent regulations based on science and local planning."

This is signed by hundreds of people from my riding.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I too have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

Speaker, I support the petition, affix my name and send it to the table with Bernadette.

#### LYME DISEASE

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the US and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature, and send it to the table with page Ashley.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The time for petitions has expired.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 30, 2011, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, these are very tough times for families, as you and everyone in this chamber is well aware. People need help. They've had a tough time in recent years.

Between September 2008 and May 2009, a quarter of a million Ontarians lost their jobs. The real gross domestic product plummeted three percentage points. The unemployment rate in centres like Windsor and Oshawa spiked well into the double digits; Toronto wasn't very far behind. The recovery that we've seen in this province has been uneven and unreliable, and while many are forecasting growth for next year, frankly, Madam Speaker, they're not willing to bet their house on



it or this House on it. It's been a rough ride for everyone. Middle-income households that were already feeling the squeeze are now simply falling behind.

1620

Recent surveys have found that half of Canadians have experienced a deterioration of their financial situation over the past year and 60% of families live paycheque to paycheque. I have to say to you, Speaker, as I go door to door in my riding and talk to families, as I talk to seniors, as I talk to people who are currently unemployed and desperately looking for work, they feel that squeeze every day. They're constantly caught with the anxiety of, how will they pay the rent? How will they pay the mortgage? How will they make sure that there's food on the table? Will their job be there in the days, weeks and years to come? Will they be able to get a job, if they don't have one right now?

Ontario's consumer confidence index remains the lowest of all the provinces. Ontarians have the highest job anxiety levels in all of Canada. That's quite something to say for the province that was the economic powerhouse of this country, the province that was the engine of growth for Canada. Now we're in a situation, under the jurisdiction of this Liberal government, to have fallen so far and to have put so many people into such great difficulty.

One out of every four people will say, when surveyed, that they or someone in their household is worried about losing their job. We can't succeed as a province if people believe that they're falling behind. People who are worried about making ends meet don't buy homes; people who think things won't get better won't upgrade their skills.

There's a growing concern from economists that household debt and economic insecurity is becoming a drag on our whole economy, and how could it help but be a drag on our economy when people don't have money to spend, when they're worried about spending what they do have. Obviously they don't go into stores, they don't buy goods, and when they buy goods, they buy at the lowest price that they can find, not necessarily the goods that are going to meet their needs but simply the ones that they can afford or that they feel comfortable about.

If our economy is going to work, then families need to be looking to the future with confidence. The question for all of us in this Legislature and in this province is, how do we confront these challenges? We need to be innovative in our thinking and not put blind faith in ideology and tired ideas. We need to recognize that the private sector will create jobs but that government has a key role to play. And we need to put the people of this province and their economic well-being at the heart of our plan. If the people of Ontario are financially secure, the economy of Ontario will prosper; if not, the economy of the province falls back.

Having said all that, Madam Speaker, there's no question in my mind that the priorities of this Liberal government have to change. We continue to get the same old ideas. Since the recession, we've had Stephen Harper

in Ottawa and Dalton McGuinty in Ontario putting forward the same solution: another round of corporate tax giveaways, corporate tax cuts. Not only do corporations get tax cuts, but families and individuals in this province have to deal with the social service cuts that come with them.

In the next two years, this government plans to spend \$600 million on corporate tax cuts—\$600 million, Madam Speaker—and a few years later, over \$1 billion a year on a scheme to let Ontario's biggest corporations write off taxes on expenses like entertainment. So if you've got a private box at the Rogers Centre, you get to write it off. Madam Speaker, does that make sense to you? Does that make sense to families in this province who are trying to hold things together, trying to pay their mortgages, trying to pay for child care fees, trying to support their parents? Absolutely not, Speaker. This is not justifiable, but this is the strategy that the McGuinty government is putting forward. That is a misplaced priority.

We now have one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the world, Madam Speaker, and record high household debt and record highs of unemployment and people who are falling behind. These things are tightly associated. If you have record low corporate tax rates, if all the funds flow to the top 1% of the population, then obviously the rest of the population doesn't have the money to spend on goods and services, doesn't have the wherewithal to actually make the economy roll.

This major direction of the Liberal government is undermining our economy. It will mean, Madam Speaker, that we will be closing emergency rooms, standing by while child care centres shutter their doors, and watching in city after city as transit fares rise or bus lines are cut. This policy on the part of this government, the Liberal government, is a loser for Ontario.

Interestingly, some in this House may say, "Well, that's the NDP going on at length about corporate taxes. What would you expect? That's their bias." Some may say that. Some in benches near to me might say that; some in benches distant from me might say that. But I want to just bring to your attention and to the attention of the people in this House an article written in that well-known and not necessarily left-wing publication, the *Globe and Mail*, in April of this year. The headline—and I really enjoyed the headline—"Corporate Tax Cuts Don't Spur Growth; Designed as Economic Stimulators and Job Creators, They're Going to Cash Reserves Instead, Analysis Shows."

Okay, so it's not the *Toronto Sun* who-won-the-hockey-game headline, but it's still pretty catchy if you care about the economy.

Karen Howlett wrote this article, and she started off with a really good observation: "Canadian companies have added tens of billions of dollars to their stockpiles of cash at a time when tax cuts are supposed to be encouraging them to plow more money into their businesses."

Madam Speaker, the rest of the article is really good, but really, frankly, that paragraph summarizes it. I'll give



a bit more detail, but when we give corporate tax cuts, we are simply transferring wealth from the vast majority of people in Ontario to a small, extraordinarily powerful and wealthy elite. They can't spend it all here. They can't just simply dispose of it all. They spread it through all of their interests across the country and around the world. That means that there's less effective spending power in Ontario's economy. It means that families that we represent and depend on for their political support, and who depend on our political support on a daily basis, don't have the money to get on with their lives because all of it is being taken by this giant vacuum cleaner into a few bank accounts, held—not deployed usefully to build our economy, not invested to build our factories, our offices, expand our farm operations, expand our food processors. No, Madam Speaker, the money is held tightly and closely, and it is extracted from us, extracted from our economy, and is not used to really make things roll forward.

Karen Howlett observed at the time, “Corporate tax cuts are becoming a major issue in the federal election campaign”—obviously, because the Harper government were promoting them so heavily at the federal level. This Liberal government here in Ontario promoted them heavily as well. Their inner Tory came out when they brought forward this policy.

The Globe reports: “But an analysis of Statistics Canada figures by the Globe and Mail reveals that the rate of investment in machinery and equipment has declined in lockstep with falling corporate tax rates over the past decade. At the same time, the analysis shows, businesses have added \$83 billion to their cash reserves since the onset of the recession in 2008.”

1630

I want to tell you right now that the people I represent have not seen their cash reserves bumped up since that recession. They have seen their money depleted to pay for their bills. They have seen the necessity of putting more money out to make sure that their families are stable and that their parents and grandparents are looked after. Madam Speaker, corporate tax cuts have meant that there has been an increasing concentration of wealth at the very top and an undermining of the economy that all of us depend on.

The Globe and Mail: Karen Howlett, writing for them, goes on to say that there's a lot of debate between economists about the role of the different factors that make for building an economy. She writes, “There are no easy answers when it comes to measuring the impact tax rates have on job creation. Economic growth in Canada can be attributed to a lot more than just corporate tax rates. Such things as commodity prices and the value of the Canadian dollar also play a role.

“The issue boils down to this: At a time when Ottawa and many provinces are awash in deficit, should governments invest scarce resources in making life more affordable for families by enhancing social programs or in giving corporations additional tax cuts?”

Well, that may be one of the central questions that we face in this country and in this province at this time.

Where should the money flow to? Where should the money flow to? I have to say that this Liberal government has decided that it needs to flow uphill to those who have the most and not across the landscape to the broad middle class, to people on low incomes, to those who are poor, who need those services and that income. Because they are suffering, the businesses and entrepreneurs that depend on them are suffering as well.

Speaker, the Globe and Mail goes on to say, “Successive federal governments have chosen the latter path”—the latter path of corporate tax cuts—“in recent years in a bid to make Canada more competitive and attractive to international investors. In 2000, the combined federal-provincial tax rate was just over 42 per cent, ranking Canada near the top among industrialized nations. The combined rate has since fallen to 28 per cent, placing the country in the middle of the pack, and Conservative leader Stephen Harper's goal is to reduce it to 25 per cent by fiscal 2013.”

The reality, though, Speaker, is that in this past decade, as the Globe writes, investment in equipment and machinery has fallen as a share of Canada's total economic output. We see ongoing declines in business investment the more money we shovel out the door.

Speaker, that has a huge impact on the day-to-day lives of families in this province and frankly has not built our economy; it has damaged our economy. So if people are wondering why it is that we aren't able to sustain a recovery, I say it's because there's less and less money available to people on a daily basis.

One thing I'll note, not a Canadian example, a Brazilian example: The Workers' Party in Brazil came to power a number of years ago. One of their commitments was to reduce poverty in that country. As you well know, poverty in Brazil has been extreme, especially in the northeast. The Workers' Party in Brazil set up a system of mothers' allowances and cash supports to the poorest in Brazil. One of the things that happened, not predicted by the Workers' Party or anyone, was that those areas that had been historically totally done in economically, where there were no opportunities—suddenly, businesses were coming to life because people had some money in their pockets.

In Brazil, there was some growth in the economy. But the real reason that the poor had money in their pockets was that there was less going to the wealthiest and more to the poorest—and that built the middle class and the small business class, as well as helping the poor.

Speaker, there's something to learn, not only from the statistics that the Globe and Mail is willing to print, speak about and inform us about, but also the experience of other countries where, in fact, the income goes to the middle class, to the poor, and that builds a base for an economy that can thrive.

Murray Dobbin, a political commentator, writes about this issue as well. He talked about why it is that corporations benefit from actually paying their fair share of taxes: Because the reality is, if you want to run a factory or a business in a modern economy, you don't do it in a



vacuum. You don't do it on an island out in the lake with no connections. You need roads, you need infrastructure, you need health care, you need training; you need a wide variety of investments so that you, in fact, can be profitable.

Murray Dobbin writes about the deficit in investment in infrastructure that comes about because there's a cut in the income to central governments. He talks about the infrastructure deficit and the crumbling of municipal services like sewer and water, roads and bridges and our ports. Businesses depend on these elements at least as much as all the rest of the citizens who live in our cities.

He writes that we hear at length about the need for Canada to be globally competitive, but frankly, Mr. Speaker, have we actually seen the investments that would make us competitive? Let's just take the greater Toronto area. People in this room have heard before that the cost of congestion in the GTA, and probably the whole of the greater Golden Horseshoe, is about \$6 billion per year. Where is the money in transit and electrified rail to break that logjam? Because companies have had their taxes cut, the money has not been there to provide rapid transit, and thus the money they save on one hand, they're spending on the other in greater expenses to simply make goods and people move through one of the central economic areas in this province.

Speaker, if we want to deal with the deficit that we face—and we do want to deal with it, because we don't want to be spending so much of our income on interest—and if we want to deal with a trained workforce and an education system that's high quality, sustainable, one that we can depend on, we can't afford this ongoing shift of wealth from the majority to a very small minority. We can't afford these irresponsible, across-the-board corporate tax cuts. This government has to recognize that it's going down the wrong road. It has to recognize that if we're going to have an Ontario that is wealthy and proud in the decades to come, we have to have a fair tax system, and these corporate tax cuts—the ones that have been put in place recently and the ones that are scheduled to come soon—have to be set aside.

Speaker, this government needs to rethink its strategy and that rethink has to be reflected in its budget next year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? I recognize the member for Windsor West.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you for the opportunity to rise again, and thank you to the member from Toronto–Danforth for your comments with respect to the speech.

Speaker, these are challenging times, and that's why our government and the throne speech are focused on strengthening our economy, creating jobs, educating our youth and protecting our health care. These are our priorities and they will continue to be our priorities.

I had the privilege this weekend to attend a number of events in my riding and spoke to many who appreciate our priorities and want us to continue to move forward.

1640

You want to know a community that has seen challenges? Come to Windsor. I am proud of the support our government has provided to my community. If it wasn't for corporate support to our auto companies, I dread to think of how much worse our challenges would have been. So thank you for that corporate support.

I have seen first-hand the benefits and advantages of supporting our employers. I had the privilege this morning of attending the grand opening of CS Wind. I spoke to many of the employees there who, at this time last year, were unemployed and now are gainfully employed and trained.

As the former director of employment and social services, I am keenly aware of where Windsor was eight years ago and where they are at today. I have seen the investments the government has made for our families and the enhancements to the programs and services available.

It is the balance between services for our families and supports to our employers that will continue to make Ontario the best place in the world to live and the best place for investments. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, it sounds like the member from Toronto–Danforth is going to vote against the speech from the throne. I can see why, after reading the Auditor General's report yesterday and attending in the media gallery and listening first-hand to what the Auditor General had to say, where he refuted pretty much every basic tenet of the government's plan.

I want to talk about some of the things that he said that I took notes on and where I can quote him. He talked about the fact that the wind and solar FIT program—(a) none of these can be connected to the grid; they're built in places that they roll them out quickly and without proper attention; they're built in places that don't have transmission lines; (b) he said that it looks like we don't need the capacity anyway, and of course he's referring to the Financial Post article last Friday that showed how we lost another \$420 million in selling surplus energy; and (c) he said that wind and solar are not reliable, which is why the other forms of generation serve as a backup.

He also talked about the fact that the 30,000 jobs are short-term, Speaker. He also mentioned the fact that in other jurisdictions the cost per green energy job is \$300,000, and for each job created, two to four are lost in other sectors. Some may be surprised at that statistic, but Speaker, living in northern Ontario, I can tell you we watched with anguish as Timmins lost 787 employees this March at Xstrata because of the FIT program and the high energy costs throughout Ontario and especially in northern Ontario, as they moved across the border into Quebec for cheaper energy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** As I listened to the presentation, I was very impressed with the member from Toronto–Danforth for some of the good points he brought forward.



One of his main points, of course, was job losses. I'd just look to touch on some of the things that have been going on.

The Liberal government has stood up for the last four years and bragged about how much is going on in the manufacturing sector. I recall them standing up many times and promoting the 300,000 jobs they were going to create in manufacturing and the 50,000 jobs in green energy. That didn't happen, Mr. Speaker, and it's not going to happen.

In the greater Hamilton area, since 2003 when this government took over, we've lost 20,000 manufacturing jobs, good-paying jobs. That probably would impact on at least four or five people in a family, so that's about 25% of our population that has been affected by job loss.

Just some of the major companies that have pulled out, Mr. Speaker: Proctor & Gamble, Westinghouse, Massey Ferguson, Otis Elevator, American Can, Dominion Glass, John Inglis—the list goes on and on. We just had two companies pull out recently, with 350 good jobs pulled out of Hamilton and moved down to southwestern Ontario with 100 jobs, and they're paying a lot less than they did in Hamilton.

We've got all kinds of manufacturing facilities empty. When I started in 1975 at Stelco, we had, I believe, 13,000 hourly employees and about 6,000 salaried employees, for a total of 20,000 people in Hilton Works. You'd be lucky if there are 900 people there now. I remember going to work, and I had trouble getting a parking spot. I could fire a cannon down there and wouldn't hit anybody right now. If you drive down Burlington Street in Hamilton, it's a wasteland. So when this government talks about all the jobs it's creating, I think it's a bit of a stretch, to say the least. Until they start bringing good manufacturing jobs back to this province and really promoting our province and bringing good jobs back, then you'll see a difference, Mr. Speaker, but it's not happening.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I listened attentively to the opposition members from Toronto–Danforth, Nipissing, Hamilton East and Windsor West, and I, too, am as concerned about job creation and job loss, but I want to share with you, as the member from Scarborough–Agincourt, that I have spoken to many of our seniors and many of the residents about this government. They voted for this Liberal government because they trust and have confidence in this government to provide stability, and a sustainable economy for our community.

Last month, Statistics Canada very clearly showed this province, by this Liberal government, has created the most jobs than anywhere else in Canada. So unless Statistics Canada is wrong and reported incorrectly, this government is on the right track.

At the end of the day, you can argue the number is incorrect, you can argue that the number from Statistics Canada is incorrect, but this government in the throne

speech is very clear in its commitment to growth and a commitment to clean energy and green jobs.

At the end of the day, this commitment is clearly listed and recorded in the throne speech. As a member, I fully support what is written in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, unless Statistics Canada is incorrect, we are committed to this job creation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to thank the members from Windsor West, Scarborough–Agincourt, Nipissing and Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for their commentary.

Member from Scarborough–Agincourt, it's good to be in a Legislature with you again. People may not know, but the member was a school trustee in my riding back in the 1990s when I was a city councillor. So it's interesting our paths cross in this way.

To you, member from Windsor West, we all want to protect health care. We know that there are industries that will need support from government sources, but I say to you right now, indiscriminate across-the-board corporate tax cuts reduce overall business investment, reduce the ability for us to provide services like health care and child care, increase our deficit and, in the end, undermine the business atmosphere, the economic atmosphere that you want to have to make sure that we do have jobs. I know that you're going to have to work through on that. There's a big difference between investing in a point industry to make sure it survives and giving banks that are making a fortune big chunks of money so that they can have even more stuffed in the vault.

The member from Nipissing: Interestingly, I noticed Xstrata. Anyone who's in this Legislature noticed Xstrata. As you would be well aware, the amount of renewable power in the system is very small. Most of what's driven cost increases in last decade has been privatization and increased investment in nuclear. TransCanada Pipelines was reporting a 10% return on its investment at Bruce Nuclear even though there was something in the range of a \$2-billion overrun on that investment.

I tell you, if you're a company that can sustain a \$2-billion overrun and still have a 10% return on your equity, somebody's giving you a really sweet bailout: this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate today. At the outset I'll let you know that I'll be sharing my time this afternoon with the member from Mississauga–Brampton South.

Today, we'll be hearing from all the parties on the speech from the throne that was delivered Tuesday, November 22 this year. What I think people around Ontario, those people who came to the chambers that day—they were looking to the province, to the government and to the opposition parties for a plan that was



going to get us through some pretty serious times that we're facing in the global economy.

1650

I think any one of us from any one of the parties today can turn on the TV, can go online, can certainly listen to your Twitter account or anywhere, and you'll hear about issues that are developing, in an economic sense, all over the globe. These days we're hearing an awful lot of bad news that's coming out of Europe. Today we're hearing some, I think, politically good news about how the leaders are proposing to address some of the problems that the European community is facing. But certainly, I think when we look to our neighbours to the south as well, our biggest trading partner, we see that they've gone through some challenges in the recent past economically, and they aren't recovering as quickly as we hoped they would.

I think that people in Ontario judge themselves relative to what is happening around the world, and what they expect out of this government and, I think, out of the opposition parties, is input to a plan that's going to see us through some economic tough times, bring us out of the recession that we've been in and bring us out of some of the economic tough times stronger than when we went into it. I think each of us looks to our own community to ensure that the people that we're obligated to represent as a result of our election to this place—we look to those people, I think, as a barometer as to how our own communities are doing, how the rest of the province is doing and how our economy is doing in a much broader sense.

When I look to my own community of Oakville, which isn't far from yours, Speaker, we've got four new hospitals within driving distance of my house, for example. We've got two in the MPP for Halton's riding, Mr. Chudleigh's riding; we've got the Oakville hospital; and we've got the Milton hospital now; it's been announced that that's being built. If we go to Burlington, if we go to the newly elected member from Burlington's riding, Joe Brant has been after a new hospital there, or for redevelopment, for a long, long time. That was also announced. And of course, one I know that you'll be interested in: Georgetown also had some plans that they wanted to see approved, and they've been approved.

So while we still need a plan to get out of the economic tough times we're in and we still need a plan that's going to bring our budget back to a balanced state by 2017-18, at the same time, people are also looking to how we're governing, what projects are moving forward and what sort of things we're prepared to do in order to make that economy move forward.

I think in the speech from the throne you'll see some things that we will do while we bring that economy back to a balanced state. For example, we're going to protect health care and education, and we prioritize them as the most important public services. Our way of doing that, of course, is the investments that I've outlined in the hospital projects around my own community. The new Oakville hospital, for example: I think final numbers that I'm seeing starting to come in now are somewhere around a \$2.5-billion total cost to build that hospital.

But when I look to other institutions in my own community, for example, in the post-secondary sector, you look at Sheridan College. They just opened a fantastic campus in Mississauga. I think that that's something Sheridan's been after for a long, long time. It's no wonder, when we look at how we rank in the rest of the world, when you look at participating in post-secondary education—and that's skills training, that's colleges, that's universities—you'll find that Ontario leads the OECD countries, which means that we get more young people into post-secondary education than anywhere else in our comparative group.

We're also proposing to make it easier for those families who earn under \$160,000 to allow their children to go on to school, to allow those students to attend school. We're proposing to implement as of January 1, I understand it, a 30% tuition fee grant, which means that tuition fees for the vast majority of students in the province of Ontario will drop by 30% and just make it that much easier for those people of medium and moderate means to attend university, college and skills training.

Simple things like transportation: We know that a modern economy can't operate without some of the things that typify a modern urban setting. One of the things we've been trying to do for a long, long time is improve public transit in the GTA. You will know, Speaker, and I think many other members from around the GTA will know that the GO train is really the backbone of transportation throughout the GTA. It gets people in from the communities that are in the 905 area and brings them into the 416 area, into the Bay Streets and the University Avenues, where they work and where a lot of the wealth for this province is generated. We're proposing in 2012 to move that GO train service to 30-minute service all day long. At rush hour, we're also proposing to move that to 15 minutes. So that's the sort of practical investment that people are hoping that we're going to make in the 905 area.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** My colleague the member from Thunder Bay is telling me that that works very well in Thunder Bay because, of course, if you have more trains to run, you need to purchase more trains. If you need to purchase more trains, you've got to build more trains, and those trains will be built right here in Ontario and right here in the member's riding of Thunder Bay, which creates even more jobs.

Now, Time Magazine recently was bemoaning the lack of investment in young people in the United States, the lack of investment in public education in the United States, and was saying that one of the major reasons that that economy is having such a tough time turning around is that, along the way, states like California that used to lead the world in public education have gradually withdrawn from funding their children's education, their public education, in a proper way. We're not doing that here in the province of Ontario, and I don't think anybody would expect us to do that.



What I think you're seeing is a very competitive tax structure. You're seeing corporate and business taxes reduced to a point where I think they're competitive with other jurisdictions. When you take a look at the province of Ontario, depending on who you talk to, it either ranks first or second, the other major jurisdiction being the state of California, as being the best place to invest in all of North America if you're bringing in capital from offshore.

When I look at my own community, I see the value of partnering with the private sector. When I look at Ford of Canada and how they're prospering in my community of Oakville, I thank God that we invested in flex manufacturing in the Oakville plant, which allows them to be flexible, obviously, which allows them to run a number of models on the same line, and they can run the models that are selling, as opposed to the past when what they would have to do is retool the entire plant.

I look at Siemens, for example. Siemens has just announced in Oakville that they will be opening their new head office right on the QEW: 800 jobs right there.

So we can look to the economic aspect of things, to the wealth generators, and think that we're continuing to invest, the economy is continuing to grow. It's not growing as quickly as some would like it to, but let's look at some of the net job increases we've seen: 75,000 this year alone in Ontario. Last month, we saw a net increase of 30,000. Since 2003, net new jobs in the province of Ontario are up over 500,000. So we are making a lot of progress in ensuring that Ontarians who want to work have work in the province of Ontario. Is there more to do? Absolutely there is.

Now, a way of preparing people and I think one of the ways you attract investment is to ensure that you've got the most well-educated workforce, and we decided that we would be the first jurisdiction, that I'm aware of anyway, in North America that has decided that it's going to full-day JK and SK, which means that our four- and five-year-olds now are getting that sort of head start that's going to allow them to flourish even further in the public education system. And it will allow them to become even better citizens, I think, Speaker.

So I think you have to look at this as part of an overall plan, as a package that's going to continue to invest in the skills of our young people. It's going to continue to invest in those things that Ontarians hold precious: things like public education, things like public health care. At the same time, it's going to invest in the economy. It's going to partner with economic investors to ensure that we continue to see the sort of job creation we've seen in the province of Ontario. We'll not consider tax increases, we won't privatize public health care, and we'll not pursue any austerity measures that could be harmful to the economy.

I think, Speaker, on balance we've got a plan that is going to be a very positive plan. It's going to require some tough decisions, it's going to ask for us all to work together from all parties, but at the end of the day, I think that Ontarians should be proud of the approach that's

being taken in the speech from the throne, and I think we all need to bring our best to the table. Thank you, Speaker.

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before we move on, I want to recognize the presence in the chamber of a former member of the Legislature who served in the 35th provincial Parliament: Jim Wiseman. Welcome, Jim.

We now move to the member for Mississauga-Brampton South.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak on the throne speech. I'm very impressed by the good comments that my colleague the member from Oakville has made.

I'm very excited about the program that our government has put forward to shape the future of our great province. This is the agenda on which we campaigned, and this is the agenda which Ontarians want us to implement. I believe that, once again, this government has outlined a prudent plan based on a balanced approach that will protect our important public services, such as our schools, our colleges, our universities and hospitals, and at the same time will eliminate the deficit that has been created by the unforeseen global economic circumstances.

Defending and implementing programs such as education, health and creating jobs is the cornerstone of our government's implementation strategy.

I would like to speak about education. We all know how important education is, and I'm a big fan of education. It may be full-day kindergarten, secondary, post-secondary, Ph.D., formal or informal; education is the very basis of our economic foundation, and it helps break the cycle of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to unroll full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds by 2014 across the province. This will benefit 250,000 children in our province. My riding has already seen the benefits from the first phase and the second phase that we have rolled out. This will enable our parents to save time and money, and our children will have a seamless day, and this will enable our children to reach their best potential.

This world is changing. We all know that 70% of future jobs will require post-secondary education. We are proposing to create 60,000 new spaces in addition to the 200,000 which we have already created, and we will reduce post-secondary tuition fees by 30%. This will enable the families to save \$730 if the student is in college and \$1,600 if he or she is in university.

Post-secondary education is very, very important, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I would have been able to achieve or do what I have done in my life without post-secondary education.

I would like to touch upon the medical school that has been opened in UTM in Mississauga. I was at the open house. It was a wonderful med school, and I was impressed by the lecture theatres. In their lecture theatres,



students in Mississauga can connect with their teachers and peers through video conferencing. I have not seen that kind of lecture theatre in my life; I have seen it for the first time and I'm very much impressed, Mr. Speaker.

Last week, on November 30, I was at the grand opening of Sheridan, which my colleague also spoke about. It's a state-of-the-art facility. I spoke about it earlier in my statement time. This is great news for Mississauga. This will not only benefit our youth, adults and seniors; it will also create jobs right in Mississauga.

Mr. Speaker, the next thing I would like to speak about is the HST. As we all know, for a long time and consistently, the HST was criticized by the opposition as some sort of evil tax. There can be nothing evil about modernizing our 50-year-old tax system. We have reformed our tax system, we have restructured our tax system, and we have brought our province of Ontario in line with 140 other countries around the globe.

I would like to speak about a foreign company which is an Italy-based company, Silfab Ontario. They opened their doors in my riding in the month of April because of the single sales tax and our Green Energy Act. They have already created 100 jobs, and their goal is to create 200 jobs. So this HST is attracting direct foreign investment, and this has made the province of Ontario second to California in attracting direct foreign investment. It has created over 60,000 jobs in the province of Ontario. According to Forbes magazine and the World Bank, our tax reforms are key factors that have grown our economy and added new jobs. Mr. Speaker, it has added new jobs.

Another program that I'm particularly excited about and would like to speak on today is the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. Ever since coming to this place, I have had countless meetings with seniors in my community office, at Queen's Park and on the campaign trail. One thing I have learned is that our seniors want to stay in their homes as long as possible. This bill, if passed, will enable our seniors to live in their home with dignity and respect. At the same time, it will generate \$800 million in economic activity and will create more than 10,000 jobs across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand on our record and I'm proud to support the agenda of this throne speech. I urge all members of this House to support it as we move forward together in these uncertain economic times for the greater good of Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for some questions and comments.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened to the member from Oakville, and I always call him "the member from where there's no more gas plant." Actually, he has some connections with the Premier; no question about that. I don't know just how to put that.

Member from Mississauga-Brampton South: I think that your remarks were important. You said that you support your leader's plan, as you should. You're on the plan. You have been there for the last four years; I believe it's your second term. I commend you.

But you know, you should really read this book by the auditor. Even the throne speech that you were talking

about started with the theme, a plan for jobs and the economy. But what did the auditor tell you yesterday? You're spending more, and people of Ontario are getting less. Even on legal aid, you're spending more than any other province per capita and serving fewer people.

**1710**

On energy: Energy has gone up 46%. Now it's going up 8% every year.

Mr. Speaker, in fairness, they either didn't read the throne speech or the auditor report, or they're only listening to Premier McGuinty or reading the notes that he gives them. It sounds to me like they're only reading the notes that they're supplied by the Liberal staffers.

But it's true: Ontario is in difficult times. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has put two very good suggestions on the table—he has put them on the floor—for job creation. One of them was a wage freeze, a public sector wage freeze. Premier McGuinty is going to be laying off 7% of the public sector just before Christmas. Our job is to keep everyone doing their job as much as possible. The other part of it is to make it affordable for families, especially at this time of year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to add some commentary to tonight's debate. I guess we're discussing, ultimately, what is the agenda of the provincial minority government. Highlighted in this book are some of the failures throughout the years and areas that this government will have to address at one time or another—hopefully sooner rather than later, because Ontarians are counting on them fixing some of the problems that the Auditor General has identified. But I'm wondering how on earth this government is going to afford to do many of them.

I focus specifically on one of the areas in infrastructure. We've got crumbling provincial bridges that really aren't being inspected at the rate that you would think we should be inspecting them. In fact, we don't have people to even do the inspections. So you'll have to hire people, you'll have to pay them, and then you'll have to fix the bridges so that we don't have more crumbling infrastructure.

Ultimately, I'm coming to the conclusion that you're not really mismanagers; you actually are effective, because your plan is working. You can see today in an article by Tavia Grant in the Globe and Mail, dated December 5, that the OECD indicates that the wage gap is the largest in this country that it has ever been. You're actually effectively implementing your plan because, again, the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, and that wage gap continues to increase. What do you do to perpetuate the problem? Continue to roll back corporate tax cuts.

Well, we've laid out a proposal. We've laid out practical steps and tried to get you to understand that corporate tax reductions are not going to solve the problems that are identified in this book, and people are looking for those remedies today.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'd like to thank the members from Oakville and Mississauga–Brampton South for their very eloquent remarks on our throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that there's no denying that we are in tough times, and every single one of us—all 107 of us here—has a choice. The choice is, do we take the easy route and make populist choices which are easy in the short term but are going to hurt the province in the long term, or do we do the right thing even though it might be tough? That's what this throne speech really is about: It's about doing the right thing to make sure that Ontario continues to be one of the best places in the world to live in, grow old in and raise our families in. That's what this throne speech is about.

When I was campaigning—and I don't know what your experience was—what I heard at the door, no matter where they came from, no matter what they looked like, everybody wanted three things: They wanted good jobs, they wanted good prospects for their kids, and they wanted safe, healthy communities. That's what the throne speech is really about. It is about delivering these three things, because this is what Ontarians expects of us, and they deserve nothing less.

So I really ask the support of every single person in this House for this, our agenda, because it's really not about our agenda; it's about the agenda of the people of Ontario. That's what they want: good jobs, good prospects for their children and safe communities. Thank you so much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's a pleasure to comment on the address by the members from Oakville and Mississauga.

I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker: I take my hat off to the Liberals. They are amazing at getting their people to fall in line. Like lemmings going over the cliff, they give them the Kool-Aid and they drink it. But I'm going to tell you, Speaker: After seeing this auditor's report, they have had to strengthen that Kool-Aid something fierce because you've got to be almost ashamed to stand there as a Liberal today and defend that record when you see this.

This is disgusting to see this kind of report. And you know, Speaker, the government was aware of the findings of the auditor's report in June of this year. They knew about it. Did they tell the people, "All of the stuff we've been telling you about green energy is false"? Did they tell the people, "Did you know that the stuff we told you about your electricity bills going to go up 1%—we weren't telling the truth"? They never said that. Speaker, they should stand here and apologize today. This report is the most scathing indictment of a government I've seen in my time in this House. And do you know what they do? They laugh it off, because for Liberals, it's business as usual, while people struggle in the province of Ontario.

When you talk to families in the province of Ontario, when you talk to low-income seniors, what is hitting them the most? It's the cost-of-living increases that are driven entirely by government policy, whether it's the HST on essentials or the energy costs that have been driven up. They can say, "Don't trust the Tories." Fine and dandy; I can live with their words on that. But you know, they can't stand in this House and say, "Don't trust the auditor." If you can't trust the auditor, you can't trust anybody, and what he's saying is, they have been wrong, they misled the people in this province and they should be ashamed of themselves.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary term.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We now turn to one of the government members to respond.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I thank the members from Mississauga–Brampton South, from Durham, from Essex, from Mississauga East–Cooksville and finally what we just heard from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I think that there's a pattern emerging in the House, Speaker. When I listen to some of the newer members, you get a refreshing attitude from all sides of the House, where people are bringing forward their best ideas. The member from Essex, for example, was questioning: Should we be investing more in our infrastructure spending? Should we be inspecting bridges more often? But I think the way that he framed it was in a positive way. He was asking a question: Should we do that? Are we capable of doing that? Would that be a good thing for the economy if we did that? And I think we are doing a fair amount of investment in infrastructure. I think it's about \$11 billion per year over the next three years. But the question that was raised by the member from Essex is a good question. It's a question that I think deserves an answer. I would hope, as we start to move through the proceedings in a minority government, that we'll start to get those sorts of questions and answers and that free form of exchange.

Some of the more experienced or the older members came out with the same old, same old. Whether anybody should be any more ashamed of what happened this morning—I'll leave that for the other members to form an opinion on that. Certainly, I don't think that it was a high point in the proceedings of this place; let me put it that way.

I think that what we're looking forward to here is a plan that is going to move us through very tough economic times, a plan that needs a serious approach, a plan that needs good ideas from all three parties, a plan that needs input from all three parties and good, constructive, positive input. Some, we'll agree with; some, we won't. I know that the Conservative Party, for example, would love to put a gas-fired power plant in Oakville. I suspect that that's not something that the people in Oakville would agree with. Certainly at election time they didn't agree with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?



**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the throne speech. I'd like to make reference to the fall economic statement—the so-called economic statement. It struck me as more of a political statement when I listened to it in here.

1720

Just to begin, Speaker: As we all know, Ontario has just re-elected a colossal deficit, debt and promise-breaking machine that will continue to run amok. "Amok" is an Indonesian word that has now been kind of incorporated into the English language.

From my perspective, the future does not bode well for employment, does not bode well for income and, by extension, for the funding of health and education. So what lies ahead will be very difficult under this government; obviously more borrowing, more spending. Very clearly, more borrowing and more spending is not the answer to a very big problem that we have in this province, which is too much borrowing and too much spending. It's passing strange that you would address that problem by more borrowing and more spending. However, this is the government we have at present.

There are some numbers, and we heard some numbers not that many days ago. Ontario's debt is now pegged at—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Another day older and deeper in debt, eh?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It's coming—something north of \$240 billion, and it does grow larger and will continue to grow larger with every fiscal shortfall, with every deficit. It took eight years—it'll be a little over eight years. This government will double Ontario's debt, and this is what we've been seeing day by day. It does remind me of that line in the song by Merle Travis, one of my first favourite songs, "Another day older and deeper in debt."

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** "Sixteen tons and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt."

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** There's an interjection for Hansard.

By the time this government meets their deficit elimination target, by the time they reach a balanced budget projected target—which they won't; they projected it well after the coming election—the provincial debt will be something on the order of \$300 billion.

Ontario's deficit: The budget deficit's climbed to \$16 billion. That's \$2 billion more than last year. It's \$1 billion more than the provincial Liberals admitted it would be on the eve of the election, and here's the kicker: Government spending continues to skyrocket.

While government revenue rose by \$1.5 billion over the past year, Mr. McGuinty found a way to outpace that rate by increasing spending by something in the order of \$3 billion. This province does not have a revenue problem; very clearly it has a spending problem, and to put it simply, with the revenue now the highest in the province's history, it's clearly the wasteful spending, the reckless spending that has put Ontario out on a limb. Every year for the past eight years, Mr. McGuinty has jacked up spending by 7%. No wonder we are witnessing

this explosion of government debt. Again, we've just had a recent bill to promise more spending for those who could find \$10,000 to upgrade their home.

Amazingly, Speaker, while the fall economic statement outlined the impact of overzealous spending, the McGuinty throne speech promises more of the same. Again, no evidence; not a single new measure to control the spending. Two weeks of legislative debate now under our belt, and we see a continued failure to even talk about the debt crisis, let alone the job crisis that sees Ontario losing something like 100 jobs each and every hour.

Those of us in opposition continue to propose solutions to help boost private sector job creation. Very recently, in supporting an NDP private member's bill to remove the unaffordable HST from rising home heating bills, as opposition we amended the throne speech as follows: "This House asks that the government create a legislated mandatory wage freeze to control the cost and size of government and reform apprenticeship ratios to create 200,000 jobs."

Mr. McGuinty introduced a voluntary wage freeze some years ago, Speaker, as you recall. It failed. It didn't work. It failed everyone except perhaps government union bosses, the ones who helped Mr. McGuinty get re-elected. Therefore, a mandatory, legislated public sector wage freeze is required to find the savings, rather than other measures like cutting services. I mean, that would be an option that this government would be forced into. A wage freeze could come in at \$2 billion, over the next two years, in savings.

As well, amending the journeyman-to-apprenticeship ratio to one-to-one, as I mentioned, would create something in the order of 200,000 new skilled jobs for primarily young people coming into the trades. I do wish to quote Tim Hudak: "We will bring a laser-like focus to standing up for private sector job creation...."

So, we're two weeks into a new political landscape, Speaker. The direction of the McGuinty minority looks a lot like the very same binge-spending, debt-doubling path of the old McGuinty majority. Both government and people in Ontario are taking on ever-higher debt. Looking for answers on the economic and job fronts that—to date, two weeks in, I see no evidence of any thought of delivery.

We have a number of new and returning MPPs here. We've been greeted with this throne speech and the attendant economic statement, and anyone here looking for any fiscal restraint, I'm afraid, to date has been disappointed. My concern: The McGuinty government's wildly out-of-control spending, spending that single-handedly doubled Ontario's debt, is showing no evidence at all of stopping.

So, now that the election has reached its finish line, it's vital that we don't lose all those ideas that so many of us here picked up at the doors, in restaurants, at all-candidates' debates and in coffee shops. Many of these issues fortunately were addressed by the Auditor General's report, and many of these issues, as we have recently found out, were known by this government even before the election.



But I'm concerned that minority leadership—or lack thereof, really—may mean continued government inability to understand these issues and to meet the needs of these issues, particularly in ridings like mine, a rural small-town riding in southern Ontario. We know that minority governments have weaknesses: Instability is one, Speaker—inefficiency. I know there is talk of co-operating, and after several months on the campaign trail, it is incumbent on all of us to kind of roll up our sleeves and deal with some of these issues, the issues that certainly were raised in my riding.

We've got some big problems looming, as I mentioned: spending and borrowing; deficits and debt; jobs; lack of jobs; the economy; and the concern that without additional tax revenue coming in, even though this province hasn't done badly on the revenue side, we have to pay for health and education. That takes up something like 70% of the budget.

Repeatedly in my riding we heard concerns, and not only the issues I've raised so far, but concerns as far as—well, at the door it was all about paying the bills, particularly paying the hydro bills, and paying taxes. Lack of jobs: That has consistently been a chronic issue down in my riding, Speaker. Industrial wind turbines: again, a riding that stretches across the north shore of Lake Erie. And, of course, the land dispute: Douglas Creek Estates and the adjacent smoke shacks outside of Caledonia. More recently, as things changed internationally, there were concerns about the deficit and concerns about Ontario's debt.

I attended something like 12 all-candidates' meetings. Some of them were formal all-candidates' nights, and it comes up at these meetings. The times have not been kind to people in my area. I don't know how people get by on their income. I know all of us would have met people at the door on a very low income—people who are working, and people who literally have been kicked in the teeth over the past several years, without any help—in a sense, with obstruction—from this now re-elected present government.

1730

Despite the frustration I predict of this minority government—we have seen what happened in Ottawa; I think there was something like three minority governments—I certainly look forward to working with my caucus colleagues. I see some good ideas, some good work, from the NDP next door. It's incumbent on all of us to advocate for the priorities of the people we represent. We are elected representatives. Very simply, our job is to represent those who elected us—priorities that include our commitments, the PC commitments, to make life less expensive, to make life less intrusive and more reflective of Ontario's values. Much of that lies—this is what we can fight for up here—in the principles of less spending and less borrowing.

We're in the midst of watching, locally, 400 jobs leave our Nanticoke coal plant. Nanticoke, up until recently, was the largest coal-generated electricity generating station in North America. It's being shut down—our hope is

natural gas. It's passing strange, in a way: We see the shutdown of coal-generated electricity, and at the same time, in the south end of my riding, we're witnessing the advent, the arrival, of something like 200 industrial wind turbines—too many for a small, relatively populated rural area. Building on our past calls for a wind moratorium, I look forward to continuing to work on a series of initiatives aimed at, at minimum, slowing the progress of McGuinty's unaffordable, unreliable green endeavours. I will say that people in the south end of my riding, those along Lake Erie, are desperate to stop this onslaught of too many wind turbines.

We must also address the uncontrolled, unsustainable rise in electricity prices. Again, over eight years, rates have increased 84%. That's a 150% increase for those people with smart meters. Again, this has to be a top priority for everybody up here at Queen's Park.

We have just received the Auditor General's report. It provides some insight not only on the shameful, wasteful spending, the growing debt numbers, the poor planning, the complete lack of oversight over program spending, the lack of oversight over these necessary programs within the Ministry of Community and Social Services, for example, my critic responsibility. Again, wasted tax dollars do very little to deal with growing deficits.

Here's what the auditor had to say with respect to the Green Energy and Green Economy Act: It "authorized the government to fast-track the development of wind and solar ... projects without many of the usual planning, regulatory, and oversight processes." Another quote: "While this helped these projects get off the ground quickly, their high cost will add significantly to rate-payers' electricity bills in the future." This is what we were telling people at the door; this is what the Liberal Party, the Liberal candidates, knew during the election.

Some 50,000 jobs; we heard so much of this being talked about. Again, Auditor General McCarter: "A majority of the jobs will be temporary. The 50,000-job projection included new jobs but not those jobs that would be lost as a result of promoting renewable energy." Further, he went on to say, "The cost for green energy jobs is very expensive. It's between \$100,000 to \$300,000 per job."

The Samsung deal: This predominates in my riding. I've met with Samsung a number of times. Mr. McCarter indicated that paying the South Korean consortium \$110 million over 20 years was done with "no formal economic analysis ... to determine whether the deal was prudent."

He goes on to say, "Neither the OEB"—the Ontario Energy Board—nor the Ontario Power Authority "was consulted about the agreement."

Speaker, it is my responsibility, and this has been going on for five and a half years now, to continue to bring attention to a series of issues surrounding native land disputes that have suffocated our area over the past five years. I'm afraid it just continues to get worse. It was only Saturday that we had eight people arrested. Some people thought, "Well, this is a good idea; people have



occupied Caledonia for five and a half years.” On the weekend, eight people were arrested. It turns out, the people that were arrested were not those who were occupying the subdivision; they were people from town. They were walking down a Haldimand county road—Surrey Street, I think is the name—in the subdivision; non-native residents. They were the ones that were arrested.

It is incumbent on all of us to take seriously the principle of concentrating on the need to enforce one law for all. Crack down on illegal smoke shops. Crack down on illegal tobacco. Again, in Caledonia, adjacent to Douglas Creek Estates, this illegal activity occurs on Ontario government land. It occurs on MTO, Ministry of Transportation, property. I can think of two smoke shacks there at Caledonia. There’s a smoke shack on the Hydro One property underneath the gigantic hydro towers. They’re brand new towers—well, they’re five and half years old. To this day, they have yet to have wires strung on these new towers coming out of Niagara because you did not see Hydro One workers on these towers, Speaker; it’s Mohawk warriors, and you’d see the Mohawk warrior flag in the past flying on these towers.

Risk management is something that we all fought for in the PC caucus. Farmers fought for risk management, something I have long championed. I have probably been involved in more tractor rallies than anybody in this House on that and other issues. Reluctantly, this government finally extended the RMP for crash crops. But the new programs have to be fully implemented, the new programs for cattle, hogs, sheep, veal. And we must bring in, essentially reinvent, SDRM, the self-directed risk management program, that is so important for horticulture.

We have 500,000 regulations in the province of Ontario, as you would know, Speaker—bureaucratic regulations, rules, paperwork, forms that kill small business, forms that force farmers and small business men to literally realize it’s not fun anymore and just give up.

I know my time is running out. If I can go back to eight years ago, I recall chatting with a gentleman in what was known as Alice’s Restaurant, just north of Scotland, Ontario. His luxury every afternoon was to order a tea and a butter tart for something like \$2; sometimes he would spend up to \$4. At that time, he was under threat of a sales tax. Many petitions killed that deal. Then right afterwards, this government brought in the largest income tax increase in the history of Ontario, followed by the largest sales tax increase in the history of Ontario.

If I can predict the future, this government will be bringing in more taxes, regardless of what they’re going to tell us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

1740

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It’s a pleasure to be able to rise in this House and follow the comments of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk and the discussion on the throne

speech. On one hand, we have the throne speech, which was the plan by the government, and on the other hand we have the Auditor General’s report, which doesn’t show such a rosy picture of the government.

The only mention of northern Ontario in the throne speech was the Ring of Fire. In the Auditor General’s report, there was a fairly long mention about how there was no real management of how our forests are being regenerated. Now, the regeneration of our forests is something we look for in the future, like the government is looking for in the future, and I hope it’s not an example of how they plan to manage our natural resources like the Ring of Fire. One thing that hasn’t been mentioned to this point, to the best of my knowledge, is that with the Green Energy Act, a decision was made to sacrifice manufacturing and sacrifice further processing of minerals in this province, because it has made our energy costs much too high. And on the same thing, with the Ring of Fire, is this government planning to sacrifice the processing jobs to defend the exorbitant prices that are caused not just by green energy, but basically by energy policy? We’ve already sacrificed much of our forestry production because of exorbitant prices for electricity. One of the big questions that arises in my riding in northern Ontario from the throne speech is, “Are we or are we not going to sacrifice the processing of the Ring of Fire in Ontario?” Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I’d like to comment on the presentation made by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. He likes to blame the government for all the problems that are here in Ontario, but let me say that the throne speech and the economic statement are action statements. They’re reasonable action statements at a time when we’re facing some very challenging and difficult times with the global economy, and I think we need to move forward in a very fiscally responsible manner.

We always hear from the other side that we need to tighten our belts and not waste money, not spend money, try to balance the budget, and yet they want to put forward the removal of the HST from home hydro, which is actually going to cost \$350 million, and I don’t know where we’re going to get that money.

But with reference to the HST, it’s only going to benefit a few, because in the north and in my area, we have a lot of people that heat with firewood. They’re not going to benefit from this. We have a lot of people that heat with pellet stoves. They’re not going to benefit from this as well. This Liberal government puts in policies that are fair for everyone right across the province.

Let me talk about the new initiative to expand the eastern Ontario development fund, including the south-west economic development fund. I encourage both sides of the House to support this, 107 members, because in my own riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, in my hometown, Alexandria Moulding was about to move three years ago, and it’s because of this fund that they remained in Alexandria and we saved 400 jobs right in a community that could not afford it.



So this government is about creating jobs. I encourage all members opposite to vote for the throne speech. Let's work together. Let's move forward. In life, nothing is perfect.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to be recognized and join in the debate and to respond to my colleague the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

I have to say that I didn't know Toby Barrett before I was elected as an MPP in 2010, but he's a cool guy, Speaker, and I really enjoyed listening to his speech, because having spent some time talking to the member, he is so close to his constituents. He is one of the very, very few politicians that remain committed to monthly door-knocking. Not just during the election, but every single, solitary month, he goes out and canvasses his constituents. So when he speaks, like he did this afternoon, so eloquently, he speaks knowing that his constituents are always coming first. I appreciate his comments, the fact that we are not just discussing the throne speech, but the fact that we're talking about the amendment, because you really have to put some bold ideas forward, Speaker, when you're having a discussion about the throne speech. I'm so glad that the member brought forward the ideas that we in the Ontario PC caucus have placed on the table: the issue of a mandatory public sector wage freeze, which I think we need to have more discussion about—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Makes perfect sense.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** —because it does; it makes perfect sense. The member for Haldimand–Norfolk talked about the \$2 billion that it would save.

In addition, he talked about a job creation opportunity that we on this side of the House feel very strongly about, and that is renewing and getting rid of that antiquated apprenticeship ratio. If we were to give it a name, it's That '70s Show, because we're back in the 1970s when it comes to that apprenticeship ratio.

I think we can provide some real change for private sector job creation if you'd listen to these amendments, and I'm sure in my heart that we'll generate that discussion here in the Legislative Assembly, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to have a couple minutes to comment on the speech by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. He spent a fair bit of time talking about the economy, and I suppose that's understandable.

But I'm always pleased to have the opportunity to remind people in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan and, in fact, right across the province of Ontario, what occurred from 1995 to 2003. It's always very interesting to listen to the Conservatives when they talk about the economy, the people who like to pretend they protect your pocketbook—responsible for the biggest tax shift in the history of the province of Ontario, that downloading exercise, that little shift that took all the provincial

responsibilities from the provincial government, downloaded on to people's residential property tax base.

Now, people will know that as a government, we on this side, the Liberals, have been uploading those costs back off of the residential property tax base for several years now. That will be fully phased in, I think, within the next two to three years. That is going to save people in the province of Ontario, every one of those residential taxpayers, a whole lot of money—the biggest tax shift ever.

As well, I always have fun reminding my constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan about the sale of Highway 407. I don't know if they did an economic impact study on that one before they sold a publicly funded highway to a private sector company, but that, I'm told, was valued at about \$12 billion—

**Interjection:** Sold it for three.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** —and I'm told they sold it for about \$3 billion. Now, I don't know if they did an impact study on that one or not.

Speaker, when they were in government, the Canadian dollar was about 65 cents, the price of a barrel of oil was about 40 bucks, the American economy was red hot, and our export-driven economy had a great market over there with the value of the Canadian dollar. Still, under those circumstances, they left us with a hidden \$5.5-billion deficit.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Haldimand–Norfolk has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Speaker, I appreciate the feedback. This will help get us through to 6 o'clock. Some very important issues have been raised. I appreciate the comments from the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane and Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Primary industry: I was raised to believe that the wealth of the province of Ontario came from primary industry, from mining, from forestry, from agriculture—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Steel.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** —steel, of course, as the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek indicates, petroleum refining, generation of electricity. That's what built the province of Ontario, and it's so important that we continue to recognize this. I appreciate those comments.

The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, if I quote you, you indicate we should move forward in a fiscally responsible manner. I agree. Let's listen to economists. Let's talk to some economists. There may be good ideas from Don Drummond. He's addressed the finance committee several times over. We shall see. We'll get an opportunity very soon to judge on that.

1750

Member from Leeds–Grenville: Where do our ideas come from? Where should our ideas come from? They should come from door-knocking, physically door-knocking, whether it's in the winter or in the summer, and it doesn't matter if it's election time, because I find there's really no time during elections to door-knock. I do my door-knocking the rest of the time.

We all have to remember: Regardless of party, we're elected representatives. That means we're here to repre-



sent the people that elect us. I look at my job in a very, very simple way. That's where the ideas come from.

Of course ideas, good ideas, come from economists and professionals and consultants, but we can go a long way by just listening to the people that we represent.

I'm out of time.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** On a point of order: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if this is a point of order, but I'd like to introduce my daughter, Taylor, Marilyn, Karen and my husband, Tim.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much for that point of welcome.

Pursuant to standing order 42(a), there has been 12 hours of debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne. I am therefore required to put the question.

On November 23, 2011, Mr. Coteau moved, seconded by Ms. Sandals, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session."

On November 23, 2011, Mr. Hudak moved that the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne be amended by adding the following thereto:

"However, this House asks that the government create a legislated mandatory wage freeze to control the cost and size of government and reform apprenticeship ratios to create 200,000 jobs in the province of Ontario."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of Mr. Hudak's amendment to the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the amendment will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I wish to inform the House that I have received a deferral notice. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be deferred until Wednesday, December 7, 2011.

**Interjections:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** So ordered.  
*Vote deferred.*

## HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 5, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act to

amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate on second reading of Bill 2? I look to the opposition first.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm pleased to stand up and speak to the bill on the healthy homes renovation tax credit. I'd like to make a comment: At the last debate that was going on, the member from Trinity-Spadina was noting about the "progressive" being back in the Progressive Conservative. The "progressive" has always been in Progressive Conservative. We are a strong party. But I would like to note that during the election campaign I did note the NDP signs had that stripe of blue on them, so you guys are coming in the right direction.

I'd like to reiterate my comments from the other day on the government claiming that this bill will help 1.8 million people. But I'm not so sure, and the number is much, much smaller.

Not everyone at the age of 65 needs to renovate their house. In fact, we live a better life in Canada nowadays. We are healthier and are living longer. I've heard many times that 60 is the new 40. So, there's no way that you can plan for your needs at 65, what you're going to need in 15 to 20 years. Therefore, the number, 1.8 million, is actually a lot larger than what this bill is going to attract.

I, myself, work in the health care sector. The majority of seniors who need to renovate their houses are usually in their late 70s and 80s. Again, it's not that large a number compared to what the government is touting this tax credit is going to benefit.

On top of it, you're asking seniors to pay \$10,000 for a \$1,500 tax credit—spending money to save their money—but seniors still have to pay \$8,500. I would tend to say that if seniors had that amount of money, they would spend it on renovations regardless of the tax credit. Considering that the median wage for seniors is only \$25,000, they would have to put up almost half of their yearly income to pay for those renovations.

When I was going door to door during the campaign and talking to people of all ages—seniors, families, youth, farmers, businesses—all of them said, "Give us some tax relief." They loved the idea of removing the HST off heating and hydro.

Now, the bill from the NDP is speaking only to heating, but that's a start. We can move to it, I hope, and get the HST off hydro, too.

People from all over my riding, from London, Lambeth, Rodney, West Lorne, Dutton, Fingal, Shedden, Aylmer, Port Burwell, Dorchester and Thorndale, all said they need some tax relief, and this bill does not deliver the tax relief that they want.

What is this bill going to cost? There are no definite amounts. I have heard that it will cost about \$60 million by the end of March, but the total cost is unknown. We cannot continue to have these programs from the

government where costs are not known. Look at what is going on in this world. Look at Greece; look at Europe. The warning signals are there, and this is where our province is headed. We need to start spending wisely. Why not have a program that provides benefit to all seniors, as well as families?

My riding has one of the highest unemployment rates in the province. We are approaching 10%. Families are hurting, and this bill does not answer their needs. Reducing the amount of taxes they pay on their escalating heating bills will give them some relief as they look for new work. Winter is just starting and their severances are ending. One has to wonder how they're going survive to pay their bills throughout this winter.

Another point: While there are some seniors who need to renovate their house, there are also a number of residents of this province who are not seniors who still need to renovate their house due to disabilities. I heard quite a bit during this campaign that parents with children with disabilities need help. Removing the HST from home heating will help those people. It does not solve their problems of having renovations, but at least it gives them some amount of money that they could put towards renovating their houses on their own, using the money they saved to spend.

This bill does nothing to address that whole segment of society. Again, this bill is picking such a small, minute quantity of people. Why not look at giving tax relief—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** A lot of relief for everyone.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** —for everyone. Thank you.

Another point that came up during this campaign—and again, if we could remove the HST from hydro. Seniors who are on oxygen have to run this machine 24 hours a day, and with this new time-of-use billing, they cannot shut off their oxygen during the day when the

prices are the highest. I imagine there won't be any tax credit for that group of individuals. Why not work to get the HST off their bills to undo this hardship? Those seniors who are having trouble paying their bills because their medical devices are running during the day: Do you think they have the money at home to pay for these renovations to renovate their houses? I think not.

Again, you look at what the bill pays for: grab bars, bed rails, lever handles, handheld showers—those are not going to cost \$10,000. They are pretty minute costs, so what is the real benefit that people are going to put in? Usually you can renovate a bathroom for people who are minorly disabled, who have a bad hip or a bad knee and are waiting to get into surgery, with a grab bar. Put it on the wall of the shower. What is that, \$35? Installation, \$50? So what's 15% of that—\$10? I mean, really, you'd have to do major renovations to benefit from this.

What they do need is services to stay in their house. It's one thing to renovate—it's like building a hospital but not providing money to keep the doctors, the nurses and the staff working. It could be an empty building.

You could renovate someone's house, put in a new ramp or such, but really—am I done?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Oh, sorry, wind it up? Yes.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** You have 15 seconds.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I have 15 seconds. Well, I thank you for—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much for your presentation.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I regret to interrupt, but it is 6 of the clock, and this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
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Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
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Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	





## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Food safety</b>	
Mr. Jack MacLaren .....	374
<b>Neighbour to Neighbour food bank</b>	
Miss Monique Taylor .....	375
<b>Etobicoke General Hospital</b>	
M. Shafiq Qadri .....	375
<b>Pan Am Games</b>	
Mr. Jim McDonell .....	375
<b>CAT Scan Christmas concert</b>	
Mr. John Vanthof .....	375
<b>Sheridan College</b>	
Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	376
<b>Magic of the Season</b>	
Mr. Rod Jackson .....	376
<b>L'Amoreaux Collegiate Institute</b>	
Ms. Soo Wong .....	376
<b>Pension plans</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	376

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Rent Increase Guideline), 2011, Bill 19, Ms. Wynne / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation (taux légal d'augmentation des loyers), projet de loi 19, Mme Wynne</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	377
<b>Hawkins Gignac Act (Carbon Monoxide Detectors), 2011, Bill 20, Mr. Hardeman / Loi Hawkins Gignac de 2011 (détecteurs de monoxyde de carbone), projet de loi 20, M. Hardeman</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	377
Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	377
<b>Protection of Vulnerable and Elderly People from Abuse Act (Powers of Attorney), 2011, Bill 21, Mr. O'Toole / Loi de 2011 sur la protection des personnes vulnérables et des personnes âgées contre les mauvais traitements (procurations), projet de loi 21, M. O'Toole</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	378
Mr. John O'Toole .....	378
<b>Escaping Domestic Violence Act, 2011, Bill 22, Mr. Naqvi / Loi de 2011 sur la fuite face à la violence familiale, projet de loi 22, M. Naqvi</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	378
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	378

<b>Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act, 2011, Bill 23, Ms. Jones / Loi de 2011 visant à protéger les gens vulnérables contre le piquetage, projet de loi 23, Mme Jones</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	378
Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	378
<b>Protection of Minors in Amateur Sports Act, 2011, Bill 24, Mr. Ouellette / Loi de 2011 sur la protection des mineurs participant à des sports amateurs, projet de loi 24, M. Ouellette</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	378
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette .....	378
<b>Taxation Amendment Act (Public Transit Expense Tax Credit), 2011, Bill 25, Mr. O'Toole / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur les impôts (crédit d'impôt pour dépenses de transports en commun), projet de loi 25, M. O'Toole</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	378
Mr. John O'Toole .....	378
<b>Twenty-First Century Skills Award Act, 2011, Bill 26, Mr. O'Toole / Loi de 2011 sur le Prix Compétences pour le 21<sup>e</sup> siècle, projet de loi 26, M. O'Toole</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	379
Mr. John O'Toole .....	379

## MOTIONS

<b>Private members' public business</b>	
Hon. John Milloy .....	379
Motion agreed to .....	379

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

<b>Rent regulation / Réglementation des loyers</b>	
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	379
Mr. Steve Clark .....	380
Ms. Cindy Forster .....	381
<b>National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women / Journée nationale de commémoration et d'action contre la violence faite aux femmes</b>	
Hon. John Milloy .....	382
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	382
Ms. Laurie Scott .....	383
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	383

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Aggregate extraction</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	384
<b>Job relocation</b>	
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	384

<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. Todd Smith .....	385
<b>Transfert d'emplois</b>	
M. Phil McNeely .....	385
<b>Aggregate extraction</b>	
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	385
<b>Aggregate extraction</b>	
Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	386
<b>Aggregate extraction</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	386
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	386
<b>Hydro dam</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller .....	386
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Ms. Laurie Scott .....	386
<b>Wind turbines</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	387
<b>Lyme disease</b>	
Mr. Steve Clark .....	387

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

<b>Throne speech debate</b>	
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	387
Mrs. Teresa Piruzza .....	390
Mr. Victor Fedeli .....	390
Mr. Paul Miller .....	390
Ms. Soo Wong .....	391
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	391
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	391
Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	393
Mr. John O'Toole .....	394
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	394
Ms. Dipika Damerla .....	395
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	395
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	395
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	396
Mr. John Vanthof .....	398
Mr. Grant Crack .....	398
Mr. Steve Clark .....	399
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	399
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	399
Vote deferred .....	400
<b>Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan</b>	
Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	400
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	401



# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 6 December 2011 / Mardi 6 décembre 2011

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act, 2011, Bill 11, Mr. Duguid / Loi de 2011 visant à attirer les investissements et à créer des emplois, projet de loi 11, M. Duguid

Hon. John Milloy .....	355
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield .....	355
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	356
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	360
Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	361
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	361
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	361
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	362
Second reading debate adjourned.....	362

### Wearing of ribbons

Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	362
----------------------------	-----

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	362
L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	362
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	362

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Renewable energy

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	362
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	362

### Renewable energy

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	363
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	363

### Government's record

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	364
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	364

### Energy contracts

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	365
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	365

### Government's record

Mr. John O'Toole.....	366
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	366

### Automobile insurance

Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	366
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	366

### Red tape reduction

Mr. Grant Crack .....	367
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	367

### Renewable energy

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	367
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	368

### Private career colleges

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong .....	368
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	368

### Anti-bullying initiatives

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	369
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	369

### Automobile insurance

Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	369
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	370

### Assistance to flood victims

Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	370
Hon. Ted McMeekin .....	370

### Coal-fired generating stations

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	370
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	371

### Renewable energy

Mr. Todd Smith.....	371
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	371

### Women's shelters

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	372
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	372

### Members' comments

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	372
Mr. Frank Klees .....	372
Hon. John Milloy .....	373
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	373
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	373
Mr. Frank Klees .....	374
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	374

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	374
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	374

*Continued on inside back cover*

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Document  
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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 7 December 2011

Mercredi 7 décembre 2011



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 7 December 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 7 décembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Ms. Broten moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I rise today to speak up and speak out on behalf of the more than two million students in our publicly funded education system.

Like you and I, each one of these students is unique. Despite these differences, we all deserve equal respect and acceptance for who we are.

As adults, as parents, as members of our communities and as a government, we have a responsibility: a responsibility to work together with other parents, students, teachers, school board staff and community agencies to make sure that our children are celebrated for their differences and not bullied because of them.

We all need to be committed to creating a positive school climate and an education system where everyone—and I mean everyone, Speaker—feels welcome and safe. Letting even one child suffer because of bullying is one too many.

The McGuinty government has always had an ambitious education achievement agenda and we have had great results because of this.

Le gouvernement McGuinty a toujours eu un programme ambitieux sur le plan de l'éducation, et nous avons remporté d'extraordinaires succès en conséquence.

We have taught our children the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy, and we have seen positive results in student achievement and a climbing graduation rate. But we now need to focus on teaching them about positive relationships.

Research tells us that students who feel welcome, accepted and connected to school are more likely to suc-

ceed academically. Findings about the effects of rejection and bullying on young people are clear and consistent. Rejection, exclusion and estrangement are associated with behaviour problems in the classroom, lower interest in school, lower student achievement and higher dropout rates.

Sadly, we also know about the devastating effects it can have on students' well-being.

This is a personal mission for me, not just as the new Minister of Education, but as a mother of two boys who have just started grade 1. As a parent, I want to know that my children are safe and protected when they walk through their school doors each and every morning, and throughout the day.

As Minister of Education and as an Ontarian, I want to know that this is the case for all children in Ontario. Children spend many hours a day in the classroom, where the personal dynamics between children, their socio-economic differences, their racial and cultural differences are all tucked under one roof.

Les enfants passent beaucoup d'heures par jour dans une classe où leurs différences personnelles, leurs écarts socioéconomiques et leurs différences raciales et culturelles sont tous réunis sous le même toit.

How students learn to engage with their peers in school will largely determine how they engage with their colleagues in the workplace, their neighbours in the community and fellow citizens in a greater society.

C'est seulement en créant des écoles plus sécuritaires, plus tolérantes, que nous pouvons assurer à chaque élève la possibilité d'apprendre et de réaliser son plein potentiel.

Think about it for a moment, Speaker: How productive could you be at work if every day you were worried about being pushed around by your co-workers? Do you think you could concentrate during a meeting if you knew that at lunch you would be surrounded by bullies the moment you stepped outside? How can we expect our children to succeed in school if these are some of their concerns? Children cannot be expected to get good grades and participate in school activities if they're in an environment where they feel insecure and intimidated.

Bullying requires attention from all of us because it remains such an underestimated and pervasive force in our schools. A 2009 study from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health revealed that 29% of Ontario students reported being bullied at school. That means nearly one in three kids, if not more, have likely experienced some form of bullying. That's a staggering number of young people who have been persistently physically or emotionally teased, taunted or hurt by others.



We also know that bullying is often a precursor to other violent behaviour. This is not acceptable in our schools or in our communities.

In terms of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in schools, girls were much more likely to report having received sexual comments, unwanted looks or touches, and having parts of their body commented on or rated. This is not acceptable.

In a survey of grade 9 and 11 students, researchers found that 27% of female students admitted being pressured to do something sexual against their will, and more than 29% of female students responded that they had been the victim of unwanted sexual contact. This is wrong and must end.

Harassment and aggression are also major issues for students confronted by homophobia. A 2011 national climate survey found that 64% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer students, and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents, feel unsafe at school. These numbers speak volumes and are haunting. That's nearly two thirds of the LGBTQ students suffering from homophobic bullying.

We all know too well the impact bullying and homophobia can have on students. In some cases, students feel like there is no way out other than to take their own lives. We must all take concrete action to create another path, one of hope, happiness, safety and acceptance for these students.

The numbers tell us part of the story, but it is the devastating personal stories that bring into focus the need for us to take immediate action. As a mother, my heart goes out to the families and friends and especially the parents who have lost a child. No one wants to know what it feels like to lose a child, a nephew, a grandchild, a cousin, a friend, especially at such a young age.

Speaker, we cannot stand by and let other students suffer like this. We can tell students that it will get better, but that's not enough. We need to start making it better right now.

These stories, the numbers and the complexity of the issue tell us that we're facing a significant challenge. Our province is wonderfully diverse, but we must combat racism in all its forms. Bullying faced by our First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth as a result of lack of acceptance and inclusion in our schools and communities must end, as must other forms of racism.

0910

Speaker, as easy as it is to identify the stark consequences of bullying, the shape and nature of bullying are much harder to define. That's because bullying is a complex social issue that often relates to the difficulties students face at home and outside of schools. It manifests itself in different ways, many of them devastating. Whether it be physical, verbal, social or Internet-based, we need to do more to ensure that each and every one of our students feels safe and welcome at school.

Que l'intimidation soit physique, verbale, sociale ou basée sur Internet, nous devons faire plus pour que chac-

un de nos élèves se sente en sécurité et bien accueilli à l'école.

And doing more about bullying means not only supporting those who are the victims, but also finding ways to reach out to those who are doing the bullying. Children who suffer prolonged victimization through bullying as well as children who use power and aggression as bullies may experience a range of psychosocial problems that may extend into adolescence and adulthood. Whether bullied or a bully, it is important to recognize the likelihood that there are kids on both sides of the equation who need our help.

Mr. Speaker, we believe in a strong education system and we believe that that strong education system prepares all young people to become positive, contributing and respectful citizens in our diverse society. A healthy, safe, inclusive learning environment is a necessary precondition for that and for our students to succeed in school so that they can go on to find meaningful work in the workplace.

The students in our schools today are people who will, in future, be treating our illnesses, growing our food, fixing our cars, teaching our children and creating our laws. We will trust them to get us from A to B safely by maintaining our roads and bridges and steering our public transit. We will look to them to keep our economy strong and competitive, come up with innovative ideas to protect our environment and keep us on the cutting edge of technological change. They are our future. Investing in our school system is an investment in our future: our personal futures and the future of the province. Our government has an ambitious education agenda to build a strong education system that will help prepare students for the future.

Earlier this week, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada—CMEC—released the results of the 2010 pan-Canadian assessment program. The results showed that Ontario students are ranked among the highest achievers in the country. Ontario students were the only group to perform above the Canadian average in all three areas of math, reading and science. In fact, Ontario students scored significantly higher than the Canadian average in all three subjects and were first when it came to reading. They were the only students to perform above the national average in that area.

Our full-day kindergarten program will continue to improve educational opportunities for our kids, giving them more chances to succeed. It will better prepare them for grade 1, and also later grades and beyond the classroom. We have lowered class sizes, put more resources into the classroom, invested in teacher learning and development and put in place innovative programs like the specialist high skills majors and dual credits. All of these programs are helping to increase student achievement and close the gap for students who are struggling. They are making us a world leader in education.

The most recent results from CMEC are just one example. Our students continue to perform well on international tests. I am proud of our students and the edu-



cators and staff in our schools. Je suis si fière de nos élèves, des éducatrices et éducateurs et du personnel dans nos écoles. They are clearly achieving great things. We want to see that continue.

Mr. Speaker, to achieve our education priorities, it is essential that all schools provide a safe, inclusive environment in which students can learn, grow and develop. La sécurité dans nos écoles est une condition de base de la réussite des élèves et du rendement scolaire.

It empowers the members of the school and broader community to contribute to eliminating these kinds of behaviours. A positive climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted.

Mr. Speaker, we have always taken school safety seriously. Since 2004, we have supported safe school initiatives that create safe and inclusive school environments. We have funded bullying prevention training for teachers, principals and vice-principals so that they can better recognize and deal with bullying.

Our partnership with the Kids Help Phone helps ensure students who are bullied have someone to talk to, a partnership which we have recently renewed. And our support for Kids Help Phone has resulted in the hiring of more counsellors; the training of over 100 professional counsellors about bullying prevention; the development of a unique educational and informative bullying website; and increased bullying prevention and awareness among kids through school posters, TV spots and MSN Messenger.

By offering kids anonymous, free and confidential advice, Kids Help Phone provides a safe place for young people to go and discuss their problems. Students can contact Kids Help Phone by telephone or go online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When we first came into office, we brought together the safe schools action team, a team of safety and education experts, to look at bullying prevention and review the previous safe schools legislation. They based their recommendations on conversations and feedback they received from hundreds of people around the province, and using these recommendations, we introduced Bill 212.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Members, there are too large sidebars over there. Could you take it outside, please? I'm having trouble hearing the speaker. Thank you.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you, Speaker.

Using those recommendations, we introduced Bill 212. The bill amended the Education Act to add bullying as an infraction for which suspension must be considered, and replaced mandatory suspensions and expulsions for students, except in limited circumstances, with the requirement that principals and school boards consider mitigating and other factors before students are suspended or expelled.

This means that now, when making decisions, principals and boards must consider factors like the safety of

other students; whether racial or other forms of harassment were involved; whether the behaviour was related to a disability; and the age of the student. This helps them determine the appropriate response to student behaviour.

Bill 212 also requires programs for students who have been suspended or expelled. Students who are on a long-term suspension or expulsion are now given additional supports to continue their learning and get them back on track. For example, this could include anger management or substance abuse counselling.

The legislation also requires that the boards' procedures are transparent and timely so that parents are appropriately involved in suspension and expulsion processes.

Following that, we introduced the Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, the first legislation of its kind in Canada. Bill 157, as it is also known, means all school board employees are required to report incidents of bullying to the principal, and principals are also now required to contact the parents of the victim.

We also directed school staff who work directly with students to respond to and address inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nepean–Carleton and the member from Etobicoke Centre, would you please take your discussion outside.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Speaker, we also directed school staff who work directly with students to respond to and address inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour, including bullying, when it is safe to do so.

Since 2004, our government has invested \$285 million in safe schools initiatives that are helping make Ontario schools some of the safest in the world. As part of our safe schools strategy, we have put more resources into the system and we are helping boards fund more psychologists, social workers, child and youth workers, attendance counsellors and other non-teaching professionals.

We've been encouraging boards to build partnerships with community agencies like child and family services, again to help connect students and families with the support that they need.

In 2009, we introduced our equity and inclusive education strategy, following extensive consultation with representatives from public, Catholic and French-language school boards, the teachers' federation and leadership associations. Student representatives and equity and inclusive education experts were also consulted. The Ontario Human Rights Commission provided input and continues to play a significant role in supporting the implementation of the strategy.

La stratégie aide les éducatrices et éducateurs de toute la province à mieux cerner et régler les préjugés et les obstacles systématiques au rendement et au bien-être des élèves.

**0920**

The strategy is helping educators across the province to better identify and address discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to student achievement and well-being. These barriers may be related to gender, race, ethnic



origin, religion, socio-economic background, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation and other factors.

It also recognized that several factors may intersect to create additional barriers for some students. We have received strong support for this strategy, and now, for the first time, every school board in Ontario has an equity and inclusive education policy.

We're also working with boards and a diverse range of education and community stakeholders to provide training and resources to support the effective implementation of safe schools, and equity and inclusive education strategies.

We've created an online registry that provides information about programs and resources that schools can use to help prevent bullying and promote safe and inclusive schools, and to this day the registry continues to grow with new ideas and information to help schools get started.

Boards are also required to conduct a school climate survey of their students once every two years. They are encouraged to survey teachers, school staff and parents. The surveys must include questions on bullying and harassment related to homophobia, gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

To support this requirement, the ministry developed sample climate surveys, available on our website. These surveys have also been expanded to include questions about equity and inclusive education, to help schools better understand the thoughts and feelings of their students about their school's safety and learning environment. The survey results help schools make planning decisions about how to prevent all forms of bullying and harassment and promote safe, accepting, inclusive schools.

Speaker, one program that I'm particularly proud of is the urban and priority high schools program. It supports 34 high-needs high schools in urban areas that face challenges such as poverty, criminal and gang activity, and a lack of community resources, to develop programs in partnership with their communities. These schools are offering programs in five key areas: nutrition, such as breakfast and lunch programs; student leadership engagement, including grade 9 orientation camps and leadership training; lunchtime and after-school programming, such as intramural sports, music ensembles, special interest clubs and summer camps; staffing, which could include additional student success teachers, social workers, child and youth workers; and improving student achievement initiatives, such as helping all students afford the basics of school life, including class trips and transportation.

Schools are reaching out to students and their families, working to develop a safe and positive school climate where the school and engaged parents are critical to creating an environment where students can succeed.

Speaker, we also need to talk about what's happening online, because that's affecting our schools every day. Speaking with students, we developed a resource for kids to get them talking about online respect and responsibility. We need to tackle head-on the impact information and communications technology has on our schools and

our communities. We want students, parents and school staff talking about how kids are using this technology and how we can ensure that cyber-communities are respectful and safe ones. That is why we provide guidance to teachers about how to engage students in these discussions in school.

We cannot ignore the bullying that takes place in these online forums and through different kinds of technology. It has a different nature: It can be posted anonymously, it can spread quickly, and it's not always easy to take down or remove. Most importantly, Speaker, it allows the bully to follow you home or continue to attack you in the quiet of your room at night.

Everyone—government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community—has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing inappropriate behaviour such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia.

To support parent engagement at school and at home, the ministry introduced its parent engagement policy and introduced an amended regulation 612 in 2010. We've developed a number of parent-focused resources to help provide parents with the resources they need.

One of the most popular is our bullying prevention pamphlet for parents. It tells parents what to watch for, what to do and where to go for help, and we have made it available in multiple languages. Whether their child is being bullied or has been bullying others, we want to make sure parents know where they can go for help.

Through our government's grassroots Parents Reaching Out grant program, parents are developing local initiatives to foster and sustain safe, welcoming and respectful school climates.

In 2011-12, nearly 30% of the school council PRO grants have been awarded to support bullying prevention and safe schools initiatives, including bullying-related initiatives, Internet/cyber safety initiatives for parents and informing parents of safe schools policies and initiatives.

St. Jerome School in Kirkland Lake, for example, invited parents to attend an evening information session to teach parents how to recognize and prevent bullying. An expert spoke to them about bullying behaviour and the role that they, their children and staff play in creating a safe school.

École élémentaire catholique Sainte-Marguerite-Bourgeoys in Brantford invited parents and students to a play, *Quand tu vois rouge*, *When You See Red*, and it also took part in a discussion that followed on how to prevent bullying.

W. Erskine Johnston Public School in Kanata used their grant to host a bullying awareness workshop and seminar where a guest speaker spoke to parents about cyberbullying, as well as the differences in how girls and boys bully.

These are just a few of the great parent-led projects which have taken place to address bullying and support a positive school climate. Preventing bullying and making our schools inclusive is something that we, as Ontario



citizens, are working on together, and I want to thank everyone for their hard work.

Parents aren't the only ones working on creative projects. Across Ontario, SpeakUp projects are helping students engage both academically and socially by leading projects that they design and implement with the support of their learning communities. During the 2010-11 school year, more than 255 SpeakUp projects from across Ontario focused on school safety and bullying prevention.

Great work was done at Rainy River High School in Thunder Bay, Redstone Public School in the Barrie region and Sacred Heart School in the Ottawa region, where speakers—one who survived a suicide attempt—were brought in to speak to the school about self-esteem. In another instance, they established a team of student recess leaders who could help create a positive and active schoolyard.

Another program was called Girl Power, and invited grade 7 and 8 girls to spend time together, strengthening their self-esteem and leadership skills so that they could improve their school culture. These are just a few of the great examples and projects that our students are working on.

Effective bullying prevention requires a comprehensive, sustainable and community-based approach, and that's why I'm proud that we require a safe schools team in every school. These teams are comprised of members of the school community who work together as a team at the grassroots level to make their schools safer.

Last year, we introduced the Premier's Safe School Awards to recognize the innovative work of safe schools teams, and a few weeks ago, during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, I had the opportunity to meet with several of last year's award winners.

One of the schools I visited was Eastdale Secondary School in Welland. There, they took a whole-school approach to address bullying by encouraging more students, parents, staff and community members to take part in building a school where everyone could feel welcome.

The amazing thing about Eastdale is how positive the staff and students were about solving this complex problem. They know full well that there are no good guys and bad guys; today's bully can be tomorrow's bullied, and a bystander the day after that. But they don't hesitate to say that this is a problem with a solution. Kindness and compassion are fundamental parts of our character, and empowering these qualities through education is key to reducing bullying. That's what I saw at Eastdale Secondary School.

I also visited the award recipients at Saint Paul Catholic High School in Niagara Falls, and they told me about the positive changes that have come about thanks to their social climate committee. Whether it's been through music classes, where students wrote and professionally recorded songs to promote safe schools, or administering social climate surveys to identify where improvements could be made, they worked hard to change the perception of bullying and to create a safe and inclusive environment. Their efforts were so successful that other

schools in the region have approached staff for advice on what they can do to get similar results. These are the kinds of collaborative efforts that really make a difference.

Last week I visited another school, Northern Secondary School, where students and staff are working together on programs and initiatives that celebrate the school's diversity. Whether it's by joining a gay-straight alliance or equity committee or becoming a peer mediator and mentor, they are showing others that Northern Secondary takes safe, equitable and inclusive schools seriously.

#### 0930

While we are proud of the steps we have taken and those that our schools have taken, we realize that more needs to be done. Students need our support, not just the victims but also the students who are doing the bullying. We must change behaviour and change the culture.

Mr. Speaker, for me to stand here and say that bullying can easily be eliminated would simply be unrealistic. The importance of bullying awareness and prevention requires more from us than empty promises and hollow rhetoric. That is why last week the McGuinty government introduced new legislation to help make our schools safer and more inclusive. We believe that all students, staff and community members should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, family status, disability or other factors.

Students cannot be expected to reach their full potential in an environment where they feel insecure and intimidated. That's why Ontario is so committed to making our schools safe, inclusive and healthy places where all students feel accepted. This is more than a "nice to have," Mr. Speaker. It is a necessary condition for student success and well-being and for the future prosperity of our province.

As a result of the important steps that have already been taken, Ontario is recognized across jurisdictions as leading the way on safe schools. But there is more work to do to make our schools truly inclusive and safe from bullying, and that's why Ontario is moving forward with a comprehensive action plan to get results on this issue. New legislation is the first step, but we have a real opportunity to make a difference on a very serious matter. It is our responsibility to show students, teachers, parents and the community that bullying, harassment and discrimination are not acceptable and will not be taken lightly.

Our proposed legislation, called the Accepting Schools Act, if passed, would help schools become safer and more welcoming. Our goal with Bill 13 is to change attitudes and behaviours, and to change them for good. Attitudes and behaviours influence our judgment and guide our actions. Without changing them, we will achieve nothing substantive or sustainable.

We have come a long way in making our schools some of the best in the world, but we cannot leave a single student behind, and I am asking those who have the privilege to serve in this Legislature today to join me



in this important endeavour. As legislators, we're in a unique position to make positive changes and to influence others. We must act for the sake of our children. We all need to demonstrate our commitment to acceptance, inclusion and student safety. We need to act to help ensure everyone feels welcome, safe, included and respected in our schools.

Students are hearing that it will get better. This legislation is part of how Ontario is going to start making it get better right now. It's just one part of a comprehensive action plan that I believe will make a meaningful difference on the ground for students in all of our schools.

The Accepting Schools Act, if passed, would introduce tougher consequences for bullying and hate-motivated actions. If passed, the proposed legislation would provide clear expectations and increased accountability for school boards and bullies, including making expulsion a possible consequence for bullying.

Il exigerait que toutes les écoles soutiennent les élèves qui souhaitent mener des activités qui font la promotion de l'équité entre les sexes, de l'antiracisme, de la compréhension des personnes handicapées et des personnes de toutes les orientations et identités sexuelles, et du respect envers celles-ci, y compris des groupes portant le nom d'alliance gai-hétéro ou un autre nom.

It would require all schools to support students who want to lead activities that promote gender equity, anti-racism, understanding and respect for people with disabilities and people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including groups with the name Gay-Straight Alliance or another name. We know that these kinds of activities help students find support, and send a clear message about inclusion and respect.

If passed, the legislation would legally require boards to have policies on bullying prevention and early intervention, progressive discipline, and equity in inclusive education. It would add a definition of "bullying" to the Education Act so that everyone could clearly understand and recognize it. It would designate the third week of every November as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, to encourage and support existing activities in boards and within communities to make clear that bullying must end.

Boards would be required to report on progress against goals for establishing a positive learning climate for all students, which would create greater transparency and accountability. The act would also require organizations using school property to follow standards consistent with the provincial code of conduct. The provincial code of conduct sets clear standards of behaviour for individual school boards to follow. It includes fundamental beliefs, like: Everyone has a responsibility to promote a safe environment; all members of the school community are to be treated with respect and dignity; everyone has a responsibility to resolve conflicts in a way that is civil and respectful; everyone is expected to resolve conflict without using violence.

These changes to the legislation would be a part of our commitment to make sure we're taking a whole-com-

munity approach to making our schools more inclusive. If passed, this proposed legislation would help create schools in Ontario that are safe, inclusive and accepting of all students.

However, we know it's not enough to propose a new law, and that's why, as I said, this legislation is one part of a comprehensive action plan to address bullying in our schools. The other steps recognize that we all have a role to play in making our schools safer, and that schools and school boards alone are not responsible for addressing these complex societal issues.

The other steps will build on Ontario's comprehensive efforts since we began our mandate in 2003 to prevent bullying and create a positive school climate. We will focus on integrating mental health supports in schools as part of Ontario's 10-year mental health and addictions strategy, and our focus on children's mental health over the next three years; and continue support for Kids Help Phone.

The growing need to support kids with mental health challenges is clear. Mental health issues aren't identified early enough, and when they are, wait-lists for services are too long. We're seeing far too many children and youth suffering in silence and families reaching out for resources, help and comfort. If we're going to talk seriously about leaving no one behind and supporting student achievement, then we need to do better when it comes to mental health and addictions. We will build on the work that we started in that regard over the last year.

As part of the plan, we will also create an Accepting Schools expert panel, to provide advice about resources that focus on the whole-school approach, including prevention and early intervention. We will also direct Ontario's curriculum council to report back next year on strengthening equity and inclusive education principles and bullying prevention strategies across the curriculum and suggesting ways to support this learning in Ontario schools.

As part of our action plan, we will also look at launching a public awareness campaign, which will stress that all Ontarians have a role in preventing and ending bullying. I am pleased to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we're not alone in thinking this way. We have heard many words of support from our partners on this plan. They recognize that we have more to do and that we need to work together, stand up together and say together that bullying is not acceptable in our schools.

Francine LeBlanc-Lebel, president of the Ontario Teachers' Federation told us, "The Ontario Teachers' Federation is strongly committed to bullying prevention and to ensuring that every student in Ontario has a safe environment in which to learn and develop. We are pleased that the Ontario government is moving forward in promoting the safe schools agenda through the Accepting Schools Act."

Hirad Zafari, public vice-president of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association-l'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario, said, "We are pleased that the government has recognized and is



addressing the severity of all forms of bullying within our schools. By promoting a safe and inclusive school environment, we are taking an important step in ensuring student success. We are glad the education community is taking real action to make a difference in Ontario."

Gordon Floyd, president and CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario, said, "Whether it is based on gender, race, sexual orientation or disability, bullying can have a tremendously negative impact on a child's mental health. By addressing bullying in our schools we can prevent mental health issues in the long term."

0940

Kevin O'Dwyer, president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, said, "OECTA has a long and proud history of striving to achieve equality and justice for all of our students. School cultures need to be sensitive, welcoming and responsive to every student. Our members will be pleased with the efforts of this government to ensure students get the support they need to succeed, promote understanding, and prevent bullying."

Mr. Speaker, these are just a sample of the words we have heard from our partners.

There is clear interest across the province in taking a comprehensive, whole-community approach to this very serious issue. It's clear that we all have a role to play in standing up against bullying. We can no longer stand by and tell our children that bullying is just a part of growing up. We need to become empowered members of the school and broader community and eliminate these kinds of behaviours. We're committed to an education system where all students, parents, school staff and members of the school community are welcomed, respected and inspired to succeed.

I think we can agree that Ontario's children are our most precious resource. I think we can also agree that they cannot concentrate on learning if they're worried about being bullied or do not feel safe and included at school. Our schools must support inclusive, safe and healthy learning environments where all students feel accepted.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress again that everyone—government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community—has a role to play, and we have an opportunity now. We have done some great work, but we need to do more. Bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia are not acceptable in our schools. What are we teaching our children if we do not stand up now?

I want to stress that everyone here can make a difference. I'm sure most of you have heard the familiar story of the Pink Shirt Day. A young boy was being bullied at school for wearing pink. Instead of being bystanders, other students took a stand. They bought and distributed pink shirts for their schoolmates to show their support for the bullied student. What a strong message to send.

That's the power of a simple action and simple words. I know it's not always easy for bystanders to stand up to

bullies, but these students have shown us what a difference it can make. There are incredible things happening in our schools and classrooms, on playgrounds and sports fields across the province.

Il y a de merveilleuses choses qui se produisent dans nos écoles et salles de classe, sur les terrains de jeu et de sport dans toute la province.

I am proud of the work our teachers, parents, students, staff and community agencies are doing.

Je suis si fière de ce que font nos enseignantes et enseignants, les parents, les élèves, le personnel scolaire et les organismes communautaires.

But if there is even one student feeling threatened, afraid, unwelcome or unaccepted, our work is not done.

S'il y a un seul élève qui se sent menacé, qui a peur, qui ne se sent pas bien accueilli ou accepté, notre travail n'est pas achevé.

No one said doing the right thing is the easy thing, but a concerted effort is required by all of our partners to make safe and caring schools a reality for every student in Ontario.

Building a positive school climate requires a systemic focus on developing healthy and respectful relationships throughout the whole school community, among and between students and adults. Doing this work requires a sustained, long-term commitment to changing a school's culture.

We have two million unique students in our publicly funded education system, and that means we have two million unique reasons for taking action and taking action now. This will take a sustained effort every day and every minute of the school year.

Our young people need to know that it's not okay for them to be abused, threatened or bullied. They need to know that, as adults, we will speak out; we will stand up for them. We will work as hard as we can to get them the supports that they need.

We are role models for the children in our lives, and they look to us, as adults, as teachers, as parents, as community leaders. They're watching what we say and what we do, and they'll learn from our actions. I want my two boys to know, today and every day, that I love them for who they are, and I want to teach them to stand up for who they are, to be treated with respect and to treat those around them with respect.

I want all students in our schools to know that they are welcome and supported. It's not okay for them to be bullied. It's not okay for them to feel unsafe at school. I want them to know that there are adults that they can go to and peers that they can look to for support.

Small actions may not seem like much at the time, but these are teachable moments. We are building a brighter Ontario. Our actions speak volumes, but so do our words. Mr. Speaker, I reminded the House last week, when I introduced this legislation, about the power of words. The power of words to create fear, pain, spread hatred, homophobia, sexism and racism is obvious, and that is what we are all working so hard to combat.



But I think it's so important that we remember the power of positive words: "I love you"; "I believe in you"; "I'm proud of you"; "You can do it." Each and every one of us has what we need to make a difference in our schools, in our communities and in our province.

It's been so important, to me and to our government and to our partners on this important initiative, the broad range of support that these initiatives have received, and I think it's important to acknowledge in this Legislature those groups who have stepped forward to be part of those who are working hard to ensure that we will develop and build a community of safety, a climate of acceptance in our schools. I want to read and share with the Legislature some of that support.

This is from Helen Kennedy of Egale Canada: "We need to ensure lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students are provided with the support they need to succeed. By mandating in law that schools provide these students with a peer support group, GSA or other similar group, if requested, the province is taking a huge step forward and making a real difference for vulnerable students."

This is from Jeremy Dias, who started Jer's Vision and who I will have the privilege to join at an event later tonight: "Students need a peer support group to deal with bullying based on homophobia, transphobia and discrimination of all kinds. By working with boards to provide a Rainbow Alliance, GSA or other similar group, the province is ensuring students will get the support they need."

This is from a youth advisory committee member to Jer's Vision: "As lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and queer students in schools in Ontario, we sometimes face challenges from our schools and community to run initiatives that make our places of learning safer. This new initiative will make it easier for us to learn in a safe and respectful environment."

And, Mr. Speaker, we received support from Nancy Kirby, the president of the Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees' Association, and this is what she had to say: "Ontario's Catholic school boards have a history of nurturing school environments that are caring and respectful places, where students are taught to embrace and respect the uniqueness and diversity of all people regardless of race, disabilities, gender or sexual orientation. We therefore welcome this legislation and its emphasis on strengthening bullying prevention and supports for all students affected by and concerned about bullying."

This is what Catherine Fife, the president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, had to say: "Ontario schools are respected around the world. We are on a positive path to inclusive, caring learning environments where the rich diversity of our students can thrive. We must maintain our focus on keeping our schools safe and free from bullying. This requires effective resources and the concerted efforts of the province, school boards, staff, parents and students—the entire community."

Benoit Mercier, président, Association des enseignants et des enseignants franco-ontariens, had this to

say: "Our members are committed to eliminating bullying inside and outside of our schools. The government's efforts will allow the school community to respond quickly and effectively to any acts of bullying."

Ken Coran, the president of OSSTF, added this: "Ontario's education workers are on the front line of bullying. They know the impact it has on students and need the tools to act. This legislation gives educators the flexibility they need to stop bullying before it begins."

Serge Demers, the chair of the Ontario Association of Deans of Education, added his support, and he said, "Research evidence in Canada, and around the world, shows that when young people feel their schools are safe, welcoming and inclusive, they are more likely to succeed academically. Ontario's faculties of education support all measures that promote the well-being and success of students."

**0950**

Speaker, I mentioned the other day that we were joined in the Legislature by Mary Gordon, the founder and president of Roots of Empathy. As many in this House will know, Roots of Empathy is a program where students are taught to be empathetic. A young baby is brought into their classroom and they learn to experience the emotion of an attachment and an understanding of caring for someone who can't necessarily respond to you in verbal communication. It's a program that has been recognized around the world.

This is what Mary Gordon had to say about the work that we're undertaking here in Ontario right now: "I wish to commend the Premier on his comprehensive approach to the pervasive challenge of bullying. The new legislation is sweeping in its engagement of all players and provision of consequences. This legislation builds on the underlay of evidence-based bullying prevention programs such as Roots of Empathy and gives direction and definition for administrators, teachers, social workers, guidance counsellors, parents and students. Not only will students be supported by informed and empowered adults, they will be part of the solution."

Speaker, I talked earlier in my remarks about what young girls face in our schools and the unfortunate harassment that takes place. I've had a chance over the years to work with Clare Freeman. She is the former chair of the Domestic Violence Advisory Council. Clare had this to say: "Reducing a youth's vulnerability through inclusive practices, especially in the area of gender identity and sexual orientation, is key to reducing bullying inside and outside the classroom. I am delighted that the government is taking strong action that will directly benefit and protect these students."

Earlier in my remarks, I had an opportunity to talk about the fact that racism must end and that many of our students in many of our schools have come to Ontario from all around the world, and that's really what makes our province such an amazing and wonderful place. But it also makes it incumbent on all of us to be vigilant and to put an end to racism, and we need to do that work every single day in our schools.



Kirk Mark, the president of the Canadian Alliance of Black Educators, had this to say: "The Canadian Alliance of Black Educators applauds the government of Ontario's Ministry of Education for its tenacity of purpose by providing guidelines and supports to boards of education, as part of its continuing progress in safe and inclusive schools, in order to enhance student success and parental engagement."

Speaker, I also want to highlight the important work being done in elementary schools across the province. I've had a chance over the past months to attend many elementary schools and see first-hand the amazing work that they are doing, creating a climate of acceptance and intervening and teaching the students in their schools about how to interact in a positive way with one another.

Some of the schools have developed programs that are much like the United Nations of the school. The students have a role and a responsibility to engage in helping fellow students in the schoolyard and in the hallway engage in a positive way. They do some of that peace-keeping work, and it's important work that's done.

Sam Hammond, the president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, had this to say about the work that we are now all doing together: "Ontario's elementary teachers welcome the plan to directly address bullying of all kinds, especially bullying related to gender identity. The commitment to provide teachers with the necessary training and resources related to early intervention will have a positive impact at the school level."

I think what Sam has to say is really important, because as I said in my remarks, teachers and schools are doing amazing work across the province, but what many teachers tell us is that they're looking for more support to understand how to interact with a student at that teachable moment, how to change behaviour and teach students about positive relationships.

We've done a lot of work with respect to the three Rs—reading, writing and arithmetic—in this province, and we're very, very proud of the success that our students are making. We know that now we have to continue our important work with respect to the fourth R, that of relationships. Teaching our students to interact with each other in a positive way, being patient, teaching patience, teaching empathy, teaching compassion, teaching respect and understanding in our schools and in our hallways will, no doubt in my mind, have a positive influence on our communities at large.

As I reach the conclusion of my remarks, Speaker, I want to highlight the important role that all of us, beyond those in this Legislature, can play on this important initiative. And I want to highlight the level of interest that exists in tackling this important issue.

You only needed to pick up any newspaper or watch any TV station over the last number of weeks to see first-hand the desire in the broad community to have an important conversation about how we tackle bullying. We have had so many victims and perpetrators come forward with their stories, anonymously and otherwise, whether in print or in the broader media. We've had fam-

ilies come forward and talk about the signs that perhaps they saw and missed, the moments where they didn't intervene. It's a big teachable moment for all of us to learn and understand the impact of bullying.

The stories are too broad-ranging and too many to mention all of them, but I want to highlight one of them. For those of you that have an opportunity to see the articles that have been written by Catherine Porter where she talked about having lunch with her bully, it was a powerful example of how we can see an interaction between a moment in time and how it would impact you for many years to come.

Catherine Porter in her article talks about having been in school and an incident of bullying that, frankly, seared in her mind and remained with her for decades upon time. Much later in life—very recently—she had an opportunity to interact with one of the young girls, now an adult, a successful adult, a mother. Catherine talks about how she remembered vividly every detail of that moment, it affected her so negatively.

For the young woman who had been on the other side of the equation, she remembered it a little bit. She talked about how it was only conduct in passing that she had done that, and she was really very sorry and apologized for it. If you haven't had a chance to read that article, you should. What that article did was prompt many, many Ontarians to write about their past interaction, how they felt, and I think it reminds us, Speaker, that although every day—and unfortunately, it is all too often we read stories in the newspaper or see on the nightly news tragic, tragic circumstances that result from bullying, where, unfortunately, young people have seen no other way out but to take their life.

What we now are having an important conversation about is how for so many Ontario students the impact—Catherine Porter is a successful individual, a newspaper writer, a mother herself, but it affected her in a very negative way. I think if we all think about our lives, we can think about those moments that we remember where we were severely negatively impacted by someone's behaviour—a moment, an incident. We know that takes a little bit of the lift out from beneath our wings; I guess in some respects you can say it in that way. If we're trying to build up our students, our children to ensure that they are successful adults who can achieve great things, we don't want to tie weights around their ankles. We want them to be able to accomplish everything that we dream of for them.

I think it's so important, as we go on this journey here in this Legislature, as we have conversations across the broader province, that we do two things: that we say no to the bullying, say no to the words that create that fear and pain, that spread hatred, that we absolutely say it is not acceptable and it must end and it will end. We will take every step to each take our personal responsibility to make sure that happens. We need to work hard to combat that.

1000

I think it's also incumbent upon each of us, Speaker, to recognize that we have a role to play every single day



in using positive words, in saying things and reminding others about what they have to offer the broader community; in looking, perhaps, in our classroom, in our hallway or in our workplace, to look to the person who might be a little bit less engaged in the group, bring them into that group and tell them that you want them to be there, that you believe in them, that you're proud of them and that they can accomplish great things. If we do that, Speaker, and we work as a collective, as a community in Ontario—we have built such an amazing place here in Ontario in which to live. We have a wonderful school system where our students are achieving great things. We are leading around the world and we have brought people from all around the world to be here. Now, we can continue to build upon that, to make sure that every single school in Ontario on every single day when that school door is open is a safe and accepting school, and that it is a safe and accepting school for every single student who walks through that door, no matter their personal characteristics. Then we can take what we will create in our schools into our broader community, into our locker rooms, into our community centres and into our communities as a whole. And then, when we've done that work, we will have all accomplished something that we can be very, very proud of.

I look for the support of this Legislature to see Bill 13 passed, to see the Accepting Schools Act come into place. I know that we will see great things transpire if we, in this Legislature, take the important step and move this initiative forward. Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to rise on debate in this chamber about something that's near and dear to my heart and so many others. Anti-bullying has certainly received a lot of attention as a result of some tragedies that have happened across our province and, of course, throughout Canada, with young people taking their own lives because of bullying and other factors, like mental health.

I'm pleased, in the city of Ottawa, that we have a number of groups that are really trying to reach out to young people and let them know that it does get better. The first group I want to mention is No More Bullies. It's—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The clock is not running. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One of the groups that I want to mention and commend is a group called No More Bullies. It is run by Stu Schwartz, Stuntman Stu—he's listening right now—and he's on Majic 100. His entire group goes to schools to tell kids it gets better and that they shouldn't be bullied. He works with Angie Poirier and a number of other colleagues throughout the radio station network in the Market Media Mall in Ottawa. I've come to know a little bit more about them. They've asked so many local community celebrities, whether they're politicians or hockey

players or other media personalities, to simply write on their hand, "No more bullies," post a picture on Facebook or Twitter and share that so kids know that it really does get better when you get out of school.

Another group that works in the city of Ottawa is called the Bengals football club, run by Dennis Prouse. Their slogan is don't be a bully, be a Bengal. They actually reach out to kids who are bullies in the school system and they try and arrange for them to become football players so that they're actually channelling their energy into something positive for our community. I think that Stuntman Stu and Dennis Prouse need to be commended for being so innovative.

I've also met with some other great community organizations not from the city of Ottawa. In fact, yesterday I met with the York Region Anti-Bullying Coalition as well as the London Anti-Bullying Coalition, and they're doing remarkable things. They're actually creating something that we need to happen in Ontario. They're creating a mechanism whereby we're actually tracking these instances so that we can build safer communities, particularly safer school communities.

There are a lot of great grassroots organizations out there, Mr. Speaker, whether they're No More Bullies or whether they are Bengals against bullying—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently for the full hour as the minister spoke. I want to commend her on her speech, not only for the length of it—because I think it was an important topic that needed to be discussed—but also because she wove through it the problems that we all know exist and many of the solutions, the people who talk about it, the people who need to be heard, particularly our young people, our teachers and those in the education system.

I want to commend her for bringing forward and introducing this bill into the Legislature. It's certainly an idea whose time has come. One need only read the newspapers, watch television programs to see the innovation, as my colleague from Nepean–Carleton had to say, that's taking place out there, that parents, teachers and children are all receptive to this idea in a way that we would not have thought possible just a few years ago.

The only disappointing thing I can say is that with the climate that exists there and with the goodwill that is almost universal in this province, we need to do everything possible and not shy away. We should not be afraid of those who don't want to use the words Gay-Straight Alliance. We should be championing that and we should be telling the naysayers that this is what we expect and that these are the words that have to be used.

I also think the minister and the government should take to heart many of the excellent recommendations that were made by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I did not hear that in the speech. But I think that if we are to truly do justice to this issue, if we are truly to help those who need the help, our young people, then we have to take those ideas from the member of Kitchener–



Waterloo, and we have to be bold enough to tell those who are afraid of the words Gay-Straight Alliance that they will be used in our schools.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I, too, would like to make the same comments that my colleague from Beaches–York has made, commending the minister on taking the time to actually address all of the issues but not shying away from the things that we need to address.

I would also like to commend the member from Nepean–Carleton for yesterday, for standing up so vigorously in defence of her position and ensuring that people know where she stands. I think it was commendable.

I would also like to say to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo that it's by working together with the two bills that we'll be able, together, all of us in this House, to find a way to stop this kind of discrimination against our children and our young people—for everyone, for that matter.

It's absolutely a non-partisan issue in many respects because it is something that's insidious in our society. I remember for many years when people used to say, "Well, boys will be boys and girls will be girls." I'm sorry; that's past. You cannot tolerate that kind of behaviour, no matter where it comes from.

So to stand up and make sure your voice is heard is commendable. We need to accept and respect that from every member in this House. That's particularly important. But also, we need to know that we don't have ownership of this. It belongs not to Liberals, not to Conservatives and not to the NDP. It belongs to each and every one of us.

As I said yesterday, we have a responsibility and an obligation to be respectful and to ensure that the young people who go to our schools feel safe, feel welcomed and know that they are not going to be discriminated against because of their religion, their race, their colour or their sexual orientation. That's our responsibility by working together, and I believe people of goodwill can do that. I think that was proven very much so by a very public stand from everybody in this House yesterday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, I've certainly been encouraged by the comments that have been made by the three people in response to the presentation this morning.

I was very encouraged in February 2010 when I introduced, on behalf of people in the province of Ontario—and I stress that it was them coming to me and telling me we had a serious situation that needed to be addressed—the private member's bill, which is now going to be part of this bill, that focused on declaring the third week in November as Bullying Prevention and Awareness Week.

At that time, I was really encouraged because the then Minister of Education, Leona Dombrowsky, and the Premier, the Liberal caucus and the NDP caucus all recog-

nized that this was a non-partisan issue. Nobody has a monopoly on this issue. We've all been approached by individuals who have been bullied, families who have suffered, and teachers and community members who are passionate about this issue. My colleague from Nepean–Carleton indicated how many great groups are out there working hard to address this issue.

So I hope that as we move forward, we will not look at this as an issue that is owned by any one party, any one person. We all need to do what is appropriate. We need to pass the legislation as quickly as we can, but we also need to make sure that in doing so, we listen to the amendments and suggestions to strengthen this bill.

I think we need to keep in mind as well that this is not a political issue. And I want to just read what was posted on the CTV Ottawa website by a young man called Ryan in response to what happened here yesterday. He says:

"This is not a gender issue. This is not a sexuality issue...."

"Bullying is not a political issue.

"When I walk to school every day terrified to make that last step inside the building ... I am thinking, 'Is today the day I finally leave this horrible world?' and 'I hate myself so much....'"

He just tells us to move forward and get the job done together.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of Education has two minutes to reply.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the members from Nepean–Carleton, Beaches–East York, Etobicoke Centre and Kitchener–Waterloo for joining in the debate this morning.

Today was the first day of debate on the second reading of this important piece of legislation, and it is a bit perhaps out of the ordinary to take a full hour to talk about the contents and the journey that we've taken as a province. But I did so because it's an important journey, a journey that all of us in Ontario have taken and a journey that all of us will need to continue to take together.

I want to reiterate in this House and say that we look very much to the advice that we will get from those in this Legislature and around the province. It is our commitment to make this piece of legislation and the comprehensive action plan that surrounds it the strongest plan that we can, to take the advice and to move forward. We do not own this issue exclusively in this chamber, but we have a large responsibility and a significant responsibility to take.

I met even yesterday with a group of parents who wanted to talk about some of the advice that had been received in the member from Kitchener–Waterloo's private member's bill and how they had a sense of the importance of some of the initiatives that were placed in that. I've said repeatedly, inside and outside of this chamber, Speaker, that we'll look to all of the advice. We look to the advice from the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo. We look to the advice of the many colleagues in this chamber who have served as trustees, who have served as



teachers, who are parents, who are active community members.

We call upon Ontarians to work with us to develop this strategy, to work with us to make sure that this piece of legislation is the best it can be, and most importantly, to work with us to change the culture and create a positive and accepting climate in every single school in Ontario and in every single community in Ontario. This involves all of us. It's a lot of work. Let's get to work.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** This House is now recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I want to welcome to Queen's Park today Ottawa City Councillor Allan Hubley and his wife, Wendy Hubley.

Speaker, as members here know, Allan and Wendy are dealing with a tragedy the depth of which none of us, as parents, could ever contemplate. Their 15-year-old son Jamie tragically ended his life, struggling with depression in the face of bullying in his school.

Allan and Wendy are here today showing tremendous courage, meeting with MPPs of all parties. I know that Lisa MacLeod, Jack MacLaren and myself look forward to our meeting later today about anti-bullying and what we can do in Jamie's memory. I ask members of the chamber to give a warm welcome to Allan and Wendy, and salute their incredible courage.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Monsieur le Président, ça me fait plaisir de présenter aujourd'hui M<sup>me</sup> Nicole Thibault, qui est la mère de Danica Davies, la page qui va être la capitaine aujourd'hui. Alors, je voudrais lui souhaiter, à Nicole, la bienvenue ici.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to welcome all of Sebastian Gayowsky's family to Queen's Park—Sebastian is our page from Don Valley West: Ted Gayowsky, his dad; Susan Karnay, his mom; Anna and Christopher Gayowsky, his sister and brother; and Mary Karnay, his grandma from Oshawa. Welcome.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce two people that are visiting me today: my mom, Susan McNaughton; and a former riding member from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Jack Biernaski.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I'm very pleased to introduce two very special people who are in the gallery today: Diana Alpeza and her father, Ivan Barbarich, who are here to watch the proceedings. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to welcome to the House a good friend of many members of the Legislature and mayor of the city of Thunder Bay from 2003 to 2010, Lynn Peterson. Welcome, Lynn.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** I'd like to welcome André Capaldi to Queen's Park today. André is the president of the University of Windsor Students' Alliance and has

been here in Toronto on behalf of his role on the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. Welcome, André.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Speaker, it's my pleasure to welcome my friends from Richmond Hill visiting Queen's Park: Steve Lynett, Carol Lundy and Paul Lundy. Please join me in welcoming them.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to welcome Jade Goulet to the House today. Jade is the girlfriend of a very important member of my team, Colin Le Favre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I guess I didn't steal anyone's thunder, but that well-known Canadian, a person that has brought great credit to our community and really loves to take a good, hard shot at politicians, Rick Mercer, is here in our gallery today. And I will tell you that it's not beyond the Speaker to take advantage of his ability to see what happens in question period. But anyway, thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Well, he will be kind to me; I know that.

## SPECIAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2010 annual energy conservation progress report, volume 2, from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, entitled Managing a Complex Energy System—Results.

## WAYNE BUTT

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I also beg the indulgence of the House to inform the members on a matter respecting House staff. Most of us have known Wayne Butt. Our access coordinator for many years indeed, Wayne has ever been present at the door, stage-managing this chamber since 1990. His eagle eyes, his hardy snap of the finger—which is probably the loudest in Ontario—and his infamous BlackBerry radar have become so much a part of this place that it's hard to imagine that it could be done without him.

However, there is something we are about to find out: Wayne has decided that it is time to retire and to take such good leisure time upon himself. As such, this will be, in all likelihood, his last week in this House.

I am told that it was nothing we said as members and nothing that we did, although sometimes you'd better check the ring of your phone because it's very loud. Wayne is just ready to explore a new phase in his life.

While he will no doubt be ably replaced by Bruno, who has got the order down but is still working on the finger snap and who many of you have met over the last few weeks, this House will very much miss Wayne and his very iconic finger snap. Just before you do go, we want to hear one.

Please join me in expressing our gratitude to Wayne for his service to the people of Ontario.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Hey Dalton, he's got a pension. See what could happen if we had one?

*Laughter.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I haven't called you to order yet.

Just for old times sake, Wayne, could you grace us with a couple?

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Just before we go on, one last comment: Wayne has told me that Bruno is getting lessons on his secret of how to get it that loud. We look forward to Bruno's improvement.

It is now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question to the Premier: Can you inform the members of the assembly when you first received the first draft of the 2011 auditor's report?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for his question and, I think more importantly, I want to thank the auditor for his good work.

1040

The auditor, as you know, sir, comments on the workings of our government on a regular basis. We always welcome those reports. We always carefully review the advice offered therein, and we always go to great lengths in order to adopt the recommendations put forward. I want to say that we received this particular report with that same sentiment, Speaker, and we look forward to moving on many of those recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I don't think, with respect to the Premier, I received an answer on when precisely he received the report, and I think I know why. Premier, you would have received this report months ago, as would your cabinet ministers. That's the way things work. Some ministries then respond and it's included in the report.

So I ask you, given that you clearly had a draft of the auditor's report months ago, why were you saying things that the Auditor General had actually debunked in his report that was sitting on your ministers' desks? By way of example, you had claimed many times—you and your members—that the Auditor General had signed off on the way you handled the debt retirement charge on the hydro bills, but that is not in keeping with the facts.

Premier, why did you say things that you knew were not in keeping with the facts?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'll try to get to the nub of it, Speaker. We have a different perspective. We do not have a common view with respect to some of the values

that we attach to some of the initiatives that we are pursuing.

For example, our clean energy plan is more than just an economic plan; it's a statement of our values. Through that plan, we are saying we value clean air, we value the health and well-being of our families, we value the tens of thousands of jobs that that plan is creating and we value the fact that together we're laying a foundation for future prosperity for our children and grandchildren so they can work in the renewable energy sector.

So again, I say to my honourable colleague and I recommend to him that he look beyond the economics—they're important—and look at the values that inform our policy too.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, this is about the honesty of the Premier of the province of Ontario. This is about whether people can actually trust what the Premier says when he had this report months ago that debunked many of his claims he made during the election campaign day after day and since.

By way of example, on page 124 of the Auditor General's report that the Premier had months ago, the Auditor General indicates that \$8.7 billion has been collected in debt retirement charge revenue, when the Minister of Energy said, when it was announced, that it was a \$7.8-billion residual stranded debt.

Day after day, time and time again, Premier, you and your ministers said the auditor signed off on your numbers. He in fact did not. So, Premier, why did you tell the people of Ontario over and over again something that you knew was not true?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, we have a parting of ways when it comes to the values that we attach to our green energy plan that extend beyond the pure economics. On the matter of the economics themselves, though, Speaker, our plan is very strong. We're talking about 50,000 new jobs. We're talking about 30 business investments. We're talking about \$26 billion of private money being invested in our province. That's what we're talking about there.

But beyond that, we are saying we value clean air for all our families, we value the health and well-being of our families and we value the creation of new jobs, including those that I celebrated yesterday in Windsor at CS Wind. We also value the fact that we are doing everything we can to lay a foundation for prosperity for our children and grandchildren so they will not be working in fossil fuels but, rather, renewable technologies.

### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: The value we're talking about here is telling the truth. We're talking about the facts. We're talking about transparency. You, Premier, now three times refused to tell me when you received the Auditor General's report. You had it months ago, yet you said things over and over again through the



campaign and since that you knew were not in keeping with the facts. So maybe you have a parting of the ways on values; the value is the truth, and we expect the Premier to actually occasionally be honest with the people of the province of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Tightrope walk towards the impugning of telling the truth, so I would ask you to be very cautious. Next time, I'll call you out of order.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Thank you, Speaker.

I'll move on to point number 2 on this argument. You sent out a press release on November 10, claiming that you made \$1.8 billion in exports from electricity, but on page 112, the Auditor General says the complete opposite: that you actually paid New York and Quebec \$1.8 billion to take our power. Why the difference in what you said and what you knew was the truth?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I think my honourable colleague in fact understands that he is comparing apples to oranges. But, again, it comes down to a fundamental difference in terms of values. The least expensive thing that we can do in Ontario to ensure that we have an adequate supply of electricity is to import coal from other jurisdictions, shovel that into a furnace and turn a blind eye to the consequences that has on our environment and the health and well-being of our families. That's the least expensive thing that we can do to produce electricity in Ontario.

We're making a different choice. There is a cost associated with that; we accept that. That's why we put in place a clean energy benefit that is reducing the cost on all of our hydro bills by 10%, Speaker. As a—I'll sit down there, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Let me, in the next chance that the Premier rises—let me give him another chance here. This is the fifth time I've asked you when you received the Auditor General's report. I know you receive it months in advance—and, Premier, this is not comparing apples to oranges; this is the truth. The truth is the truth; the facts are the facts. The Auditor General, on page 112, said that between 2005 and 2011, "Ontario received \$1.8 billion less for its electricity exports than what it ... cost electricity ratepayers of Ontario." In short, the auditor says that we have subsidized Quebec and New York \$1.8 billion to take our power.

The Premier had those facts before him, yet on November 10, they put out a press release saying the complete opposite, saying that we made money on it. Speaker, that is not in keeping with the truth. So I ask you, Premier, when you're saying something that you know is not in keeping with the facts, why should any of us believe a word you say anymore?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, my honourable colleague will know that in fact there is kind of a to-and-fro when it comes to selling and importing of electricity. He may know that last year we came out ahead by \$335 million. He may also want to recognize that, since 2006,

we are ahead by \$1.8 billion. And he may want to acknowledge that under the last two years of their government, we paid \$900 million net to import electricity into Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, there you go again. You're saying something that has been debunked by the Auditor General, that was made in black and white to the media and to the public two days ago, but you had it months ago. So I want to get back to basic facts here. You received this report months and months ago, yet you said things, during the campaign and since, that you knew had already been debunked by the Auditor General. Another example: You sent out 15 press releases—count them, 15—boasting about 50,000 jobs that never happened, that the auditor says were part-time jobs at best, and that were tremendously exaggerated, we all know.

So, Premier, not once, not twice—three times you've said things that you knew were not in keeping with the facts. Why should we trust a word you say when you dismiss out of hand what the Auditor General said and what you knew months and months ago?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I thought we had a pretty important conversation about this particular policy during the recent election, and we had an opportunity to put our positions forward—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** —and present them to the people of Ontario. I thought the people of Ontario, on this issue in particular, were pretty decisive. They said yes to clean air, they said yes to new jobs, and they said yes to building a new foundation for prosperity that moves us beyond dirty fossil fuels into an exciting clean era of energy from renewable sources like the wind and the sun. I thought the people spoke very forcefully, very decisively and very directly on this matter, and I would encourage my honourable colleague to accept that.

1050

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. For households that are paying more than ever to keep the lights on, the auditor's findings make for pretty scary stuff. Either the Premier thinks it's time to actually clean up the mess in Ontario's deregulated electricity system or he's happy with a system that leaves families and businesses paying the highest electricity rates in the entire country. Which is it, Speaker?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I welcome the question from my honourable colleague. I'm not sure of the basis for that last statement in that question.

What I can say is that we've worked hard, given what it is that we inherited: an electricity system that was in disrepair, an electricity system which had begun to fail us. There were brownouts; there was a blackout.



It turns out those wooden hydro poles don't last forever. You've got to continue to invest in the system itself, so we've invested in some 5,000 new kilometres of transmission, thousands of megawatts of new generation.

Yes, Speaker, we are seizing an exciting new opportunity. We are investing in renewable electricity. We are creating thousands of new jobs and cleaning up our air at the same time. We are positioning ourselves to be at the forefront of an exciting new industry in all of North America. We want to do more than just supply ourselves; we want to export to the United States of America.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the government has created an alphabet soup of electricity agencies that spend millions in developing plans and billions signing private power deals, only to scrap the plans and leave ratepayers with the bill.

If the Premier is so committed to this status quo, he should at least share with us how much his private power schemes are costing us. Will he instruct the Auditor General to review his cancelled private power deals in Oakville and Mississauga?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We are moving as quickly as we can—and as thoughtfully as we can, at the same time—to ensure that we have all the electricity we need to power our economy, our schools, our hospitals and our homes.

We did something that had never been done before: We put before the public a 20-year power plan. We sought comment from experts and the public alike, and we put in place a plan that will ensure that we have all the power we need to power this economy and meet our long-term needs. I would encourage my honourable colleague to consult that plan.

We understand that there's a cost associated with this. You cannot refurbish your nuclear plants, you cannot put in place, as we have, seven new gas plants, you cannot expand capacity at Niagara Falls without there being a corresponding cost. That means there's going to be an increase in our bills. That's why we've put in place the clean energy benefit that reduces those bills by 10%.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, au contraire, Speaker. I would submit that today in Ontario we have a power authority that has no real authority to make power plans; we have an energy board that isn't allowed to protect consumers; a publicly owned generator that isn't allowed to build renewable power projects; and some of the highest electricity rates in the entire country.

The Premier wants to defend the status quo that isn't working. Will he call the auditor today and ask him to look into the private power boondoggles, the hot mess, that he has created in Oakville and Mississauga?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, as my honourable colleague knows, she can put any kind of request before the Auditor General. As she knows as well, he and his office can pursue anything they choose to pursue. Far be it from me to direct him on these matters.

But I would ask that my honourable colleague lend her support, at least in principle, to the adoption of renewable energy here in Ontario. It would be nice—traditionally, that part of the political spectrum was supportive of progressive policies that moved us away from fossil fuels into harnessing the power of the wind and the sun. It would be nice for Ontario families to know that they're on their side when it comes to clear air, new jobs and supporting green energy policies in Ontario.

## AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. Last May, the finance minister told this House: "I am most proud of our record on auto insurance and how we've held the rate of growth on costs in auto insurance, because that's what matters to people."

Does the Premier feel the same sense of pride as his minister in the wake of the Auditor General's report?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and report a few facts to my colleague opposite. First of all, with respect to auto insurance, this is the one government in the last 21 years that has actually held the rate of increase at approximately the rate of inflation. Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker; that's the reality. The leader of the third party can make statements.

The auditor correctly pointed out that Ontario's rates are among the highest in the country, as they have been for most of the last 50 years. Why? We have a population of 13 million people. We have more roads. We have more factors that influence that. They're difficult to manage; I agree.

There have been plans, for instance, in the past to create public auto insurance, and the government of the day flip-flopped and said, "No, we're not going to do that. We're going to stick with the system." They made a difficult choice at the time, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the realities of our insurance market.

We have done a good job on insurance. There's more to do. We welcome the auditor's report, and we—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the auditor reveals clearly that this government has dropped the ball on following up on fraud, for example, but on the other hand is protecting juicy profits for the insurance companies. Their priorities are in the wrong order, I would submit.

Everyday people are lucky if they're getting a raise at all in today's economy. Why is the government giving insurance companies guaranteed, huge, juicy profits year over year over year?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, here are the facts: Our auto insurance rates have gone up at the rate of inflation since 2003. In fact, over the first six years of our government, they actually came down, Mr. Speaker. There's no doubt that that has changed in the last couple of years.



Under that leader's party's governance, rates went up 26%. That's the reality. In the last two years of the Conservative government, rates went up 43%.

There's no doubt that there's more to do. We appointed the task force on fraud in the last budget. We received their interim report last week. We've made it public. I look forward to the leader of the third party's comments with respect to the recommendations in that report, which are fairly sweeping. That is an area we have to move on. We will continue to make the choices that keep auto insurance affordable for Ontarians and give them more flexibility in designing their—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontario families are the ones feeling the squeeze. Wages are falling, jobs are disappearing and households are paying more to keep their lights on—more than any other person in the country. People in Ontario are paying more. And they're paying more and more and more to keep their cars on the road.

We have a government, of course, that insists that everything is just fine. Will the Premier and his minister take a practical step today and tell families that he is going to start rolling back the guaranteed profits that are driving up insurance rates for drivers in this province?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have put forward to the people of Ontario a number of initiatives to help them with the cost of living. There's one before the House now: the healthy homes renovation tax credit, which will help our senior citizens. I invite the leader of the third party to support that initiative.

We did the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit: 10% off of people's bills, including the tax portion of their bill, to help them as we transition to a cleaner, greener economy. We created the Ontario Child Benefit, something that helps families of modest means with their children; it represented a large tax cut. We welcome your continued support on that. We have laid out a tax plan for jobs and growth that is helping this economy move forward. We cut personal taxes for 93% of Ontarians; unfortunately, the leader of that party voted against it.

We'll continue to represent and do things in the best interest of all Ontario families.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My question is for the Premier. The Auditor General has told us that hydro rates will go up 8% every year, and 60% of that increase is due to wind and solar projects. Those skyrocketing hydro rates are of great concern to Ontario families and industry.

1100

Speaker, let me read you a statement that takes this to the next logical conclusion: "I submit I am not going out on much of a limb when I say there is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment."

Premier, do you agree with the statement, considering you were the author?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Look, it's very—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The cheapest thing to do—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sit down, please. The question's been put. Let's hear the answer.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The cheapest thing to do is to burn coal. And for many years, that's what they wanted to do across the aisle. You burn coal, but you never consider in the cost in human suffering to those with respiratory ailments—more than \$4 billion a year alone.

We've made a different choice. We decided we're getting out of coal to clean up the air and improve the health of Ontarians. We also decided with our renewable energies that we'd create jobs here in Ontario for the benefit of families. It's working. We're thousands of jobs ahead. We're going to clean up the air and support good jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My supplementary again is to the Premier. The Auditor General confirmed there are no 50,000 jobs in renewable energy; in fact, 30,000 of the jobs claimed will be temporary. He went on to say that for each green energy job, it costs \$300,000, and for each job created, two to four jobs are lost in other sectors. Now, Speaker, that rang true in the city of Timmins, where 787 Xstrata employees lost their jobs when the company moved to Quebec for cheaper energy.

Premier, will you admit today that the Auditor General got it right: Your green energy plan is driving up the cost of hydro bills while killing thousands of private sector jobs?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It's not correct at all, Speaker. What in fact we're doing with our renewable energy policy is we're on the way to creating 50,000 jobs, direct and indirect jobs. We're already 20,000 ahead. We're already \$26 billion ahead.

You don't have to take my word for it. Look around. Go to Windsor and see the CS plant. Go to Tillsonburg and see the plant up there. Go across this province and see those involved in renewable energy. We've been very focused.

There are studies all over the map here. We've been very focused on the bottom line for businesses. We brought in the HST, which they opposed the day we brought it in. We brought in a special rate of electricity for businesses. We brought in cheaper rates for investing in plant machinery in the province of Ontario. We're focused on the bottom line for business, which means jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Our Auditor General found yet again that the Minister of Health has spent billions of precious health care dollars without monitoring the effectiveness of the spending, without being able to show much for those dollars.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the minister gave physicians under alternate payment arrangements a 25% raise, but when the auditor asked for a study that showed the effectiveness of the spending, the ministry couldn't produce anything: nothing, zilch, nada, rien du tout.

Why did the minister agree to spend billions of dollars on alternate payment arrangements without knowing if patients would be better served?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I'm going to actually take the liberty of quoting the member opposite from 2008 Hansard. France Gélinas says, "Having physicians operating under a small-business, fee-for-service model hinders the implementation of an interdisciplinary team, which we know provides the best primary health care...."

So we know that the member opposite does support the notion that physicians working in groups and interdisciplinary teams actually provide better care for people. We know this, as the member opposite knows this, because we've seen that impact in other jurisdictions.

What we are doing now, because we've had family health teams and the interdisciplinary models for a little while now, is that we are now able to start to study the health impacts.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I stand by my words, Mr. Speaker. But the Auditor General did not review family health teams; he reviewed the FHG, the FHO, the FHN. Those have nothing to do with interdisciplinary care.

Our auditor also asked, why did emergency physician payments increase 40% while volume in emergency rooms only increased 7%? He asked, why is it that 22% of patients in alternate payment arrangement organizations did not visit their physicians? They went elsewhere for care, but the ministry continued to pay both. He asked, why did the ministry have to pay the northern physicians to tell the ministry how much the ministry was paying them?

Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that every time we count on this government for major reform, like the electronic health record, like primary care reform—why is it that all this government does is throw the bank away?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I think it's important that we acknowledge the tremendous strides that we have made when it comes to health care and the work that doctors do in this province. We've come a long way in attaching people to primary care physicians. That's in part because of the new models of care that we have

supported. Our emergency department wait times have come down, and we are working to continue that progress in emergency departments.

There was a time under the previous government when I think 23 out of 26 GTA hospitals were on bypass; ambulances could not go to those emergency departments because they didn't have the capacity. When is the last time you heard of an emergency department on bypass? We had a question from the member from Kenora—Rainy River earlier this week stressing the importance of keeping that emergency department open.

Speaker, we've had terrific results and we must—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

### EDUCATION

**Ms. Soo Wong:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, yesterday the Auditor General released his annual report. As an Ontario Liberal, I was very proud to read about this government's success in education—proud to hear that this government has succeeded in lowering the dropout rate.

As a former Toronto District School Board trustee, I've always believed that education is one of the most important things that we can give our children. That's why I'm so pleased that there are 18 new full-day kindergarten classes in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. Families are saving thousands of dollars in child care costs while kids are receiving world-class education.

I know that every member in the House agrees that a strong education system is the key to Ontario's future prosperity. Thanks to the hard work of our teachers, students and parents, graduation rates are up 13% and the test scores are up 15% since—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Education and women's issues.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt for the advocacy that she has done for so many years on behalf of Ontario students.

Speaker, I want to speak clearly about the success that we measure by way of our increased graduation rates. We measure our graduation rate over five years. That's the same approach that previous governments had. We've talked in the House today about apples-to-oranges comparisons, and I want to say clearly: This is an apples-to-apples comparison.

The member is right: We've increased the graduation rate by 13% since coming to office in 2003. It's a significant change that we're making in the lives of Ontario's young people.

We are very proud of our students. They have come out on top in the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program. Ontario students were the only ones to score above the national average in math, science and reading. Say to an Ontario student today—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?



**Ms. Soo Wong:** Minister, thank you for your response. I know the best thing we can do for Ontario's future prosperity is to invest in our kids.

But the figures that you just presented are on average. What about the students who fall below those average scores? I know that your ministry has a program called Focus on Youth which helps school boards to run summer programs in high-needs neighbourhoods. Minister, can you tell this House what else your ministry is doing in helping at-risk kids?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** The member is absolutely right: We have to continue to reach out to those students who are most at risk in our schools. I'm so pleased that the auditor specifically pointed out our successes in helping at-risk students. He indicated that we did a good job of identifying and providing supports to individual students considered at risk of not graduating. He also pointed out that all boards now have plans in place and risk factors identified to help at-risk students.

1110

We have programs like the specialist high skills major, extended co-op and dual credits. We've given extra support to schools who face challenges. Now we've introduced the Accepting Schools Act, because we know that every child, every student can reach their full potential if they are in a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Speaker, we're proud of the work that we've done. We have more work to do. We look to continue doing that work.

#### PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES

**Mr. Rob Leone:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. On Monday, the Auditor General lambasted the Liberal government, which has completely dropped the ball when it comes to private career colleges. The Auditor General found that illegal private trainers, which were supposed to have been closed by this province, continue to operate illegally under the Liberal government. This oversight is harmful not only to the students in desperate need of good job training, but also to legitimate and successful private career colleges which have always played by the rules.

Why is the minister allowing these unaccredited training centres to continue to operate and tarnish the reputation of successful businesses across the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The only person tarnishing the reputation of these businesses is the member opposite, quite frankly.

We actually see an important role for these private colleges, which educate 60,000 Ontarians, are helping many Ontarians get back into the economy and are highly linked to the private sector.

We have been resolving issues we inherited from previous governments. This year alone, we took over 100 enforcement actions against illegal operators—better than any other party in power. We have now gone through all

of the high-risk colleges for the first time and we have resolved all of the outstanding issues. We're now going through the medium-risk colleges.

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that we are talking about 470 colleges, a relatively small number.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm not sure if the minister is thinking that I've tarnished the reputation of private career colleges or if he's saying that the Auditor General has tarnished their reputation.

The Auditor General even stated, "Further improvements are required to ensure compliance with the act, its regulations, and ministry policies, and to better ensure that the ministry's primary objective of protecting students is met."

The ministry has known for years about these compliance issues. There has been gross mismanagement in compliance at the minister's department. Can the minister assure Ontarians that this culture of incompetence leaves that ministry and this government and is replaced by a culture of at least complying with its own laws and policies?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The language the opposite members use is not found in the auditor's report. This is hyperbole and gross exaggeration, first off. So maybe we could just actually read the report.

The second is, unlike the party opposite, we actually believe that private-sector-run educational facilities make an important contribution; that we cannot, in the age that we are living in right now, have an entirely public system; and that there's an important role.

We know that, as the party opposite voted against the private colleges act, they don't support the private sector at all, they don't support these businesses and they would be happy to remove 60,000 off of places for students, the same way they want a made-in-government solution to the trades and apprenticeships and remove the private sector participation from that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, there used to be a time not long ago in this province that motorists would know that the Ministry of Transportation would ensure that highways, when it snowed, were open and that we can pass on them with our vehicles.

So far this fall, we've had Highway 402 closed because of snowfall; we've had Highway 17 between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury and Highway 11 between North Bay and Hearst closed, where we've never seen them closed before. So we started checking around, and what we found—

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It's the weather.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, they say it's the weather. Well, let me tell you where the storm exists. The storm exists because the government has created what's called



performance-based contracts, and those performance-based contracts have lowered the specifications so that 25% less equipment is being used to clear our highways.

My question to you is simply this: Why are you prepared to jeopardize road safety by lowering the maintenance standards in those performance-based contracts?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member for the question and for bringing his concerns to my attention.

Ontario has among the highest safety records on our highways in North America. We're proud of that, and we're going to continue that record. Our winter maintenance standards are among the highest in North America, as I mentioned. The ministry and its contractors continually monitor weather and road conditions so they can respond quickly. Our contractors are required to meet ministry standards. We monitor their work before, during and after a winter storm.

I will certainly look into the complaints that you're bringing to the House. I will review those particular highways and the weather conditions at the time, and I'll be very pleased to get back to you with a report and/or meet with you personally to discuss it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I appreciate that you're going to look into it, Minister, but you're the one that lowered the standard. It is the Liberal government of Ontario that has said highways used be maintained at a particular standard, and when you renegotiated the new contracts, you said, "We're going to lower the standard." As a result, there's 25% less equipment being used in those new contracts. That's why Highway 402 was closed. That's why Highways 17 and 11 were closed.

So I say to you again, Minister, we have always been able to drive on these highways when it comes to the type of snowfalls we have seen up to now. Will you reverse that decision? If not, I believe that people's lives will be at risk.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, we use current technology, tools and methods to keep our roads safe for winter driving, while using best management practices, including road and weather information stations, pre-wetted pre-treated salt, direct liquid application, fixed automated spray technology, electronic spreader controls, changeable message signs and many others.

On the other hand, as I mentioned to the member in the answer to the main question, I will look into the situation that he's bringing to our attention, and we will report back to him. I would be happy to meet with him and review the situation.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Construction is under way on the GO expansion for the Georgetown South rail corridor and the air-rail link project. Changes have been made to the original proposal, such as a stop in Weston and

partially tunnelling the trains to address the concerns expressed by the residents of York South-Weston. However, there are concerns about the health effects that the increased number of trains could cause.

Speaker, my community and I support electrification as soon as it is technically possible. Could the minister update us on where we stand on electrification?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I'd like to thank the member for York South-Weston for her question and for her tireless advocacy on behalf of her constituents.

Metrolinx identified this line along with Lakeshore as priorities for electrification, and we are moving forward with that development in a very responsible way. As the member knows, the necessary first step towards electrification is the completion of a comprehensive environmental assessment, and that process is progressing well.

In the interim, we are using state-of-the-art, ultra-low-emission, tier 4 engine technology. These engines are designed to be converted to electricity when infrastructure upgrades are complete.

The air-rail link is an important project for the mobility, the environment and the economy of the GTA. It will not only create 10,000 jobs but will also eliminate 1.2 million car trips in its first year alone. Mr. Speaker, eliminating 1.2 million car trips is a tremendous boost for our air quality in itself.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you, Minister. I am aware that Metrolinx conducted a review of human health assessment, as required by the Ministry of the Environment, for the project to move forward. Recently, questions have been asked in this House, citing concerns of increased risk of asthma and cancer for the residents along the line, concerns similar to those made by the Toronto medical officer of health two years ago.

1120

Speaker, we all take health risks of our constituents very seriously, and clean air is important to our government and all Ontarians. Can the minister speak to the recently updated human health mitigation plan and assure my constituents that it protects air quality in York South-Weston as we move forward towards electrification?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. The human health mitigation plan was updated to reflect the move to cleaner tier 4 engine technology and look at what, if any, impact on air quality would result. The plan concluded that the utilization of tier 4 technology effectively mitigates emissions from the corridor while we move forward, implementing electrification. Particulate emissions from these tier 4 engines are 90% less than older trains in the existing GO fleet, and Toronto's medical officer of health offered input into the plan and is satisfied with the approach we are taking and the measures we are putting in place.

We take our responsibility to protect the local environment seriously, unlike the NDP, who want to subsidize gas guzzlers and gridlock in the GTA for the next 50 years. We've got a plan to get people moving between



Pearson and Union Station, to do so in time for the Pan Am Games—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### WASTE DIVERSION

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, the Auditor General is not the only one questioning your government's failures in managing programs. Last week, the Environmental Commissioner said that despite your government's 60% waste diversion target, you've only gone from 20% to a whopping 23%.

Minister, I have to ask you: You were a teacher; is 23% a passing or failing grade?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Here comes the answer. I'll tell you in a minute.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** One thing I can tell you is it's much more progress than ever existed under the party members there that fought all of these efforts tooth and nail.

Now, I know that one of the proposals that your party had was to foist the cost of certain diversions back on to municipalities, because when I was at the AMO conference one of the things they said to me was, "We're glad that you are putting that on the cost of the producers as opposed to sticking the municipalities with that particular cost." So I explained that to them and they were very pleased. But will you find that there has been some considerable progress—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, I will remind you that it was a PC government that created the blue box program.

Minister, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, BC and Quebec are far ahead of Ontario in waste diversion. And last week, the Environmental Commissioner that your government appointed said in his report that the Liberal government is stubbornly refusing to engage solutions to the waste management problem. So I ask you again, Minister: Will you make waste diversion a priority now or will we have to wait for another scathing report from the Auditor General to force to you act?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, the efforts are progressing well. One progressive effort we have is that after I chastised you for not asking a question the other day about the environment, being bullied by your fellow members into not asking any questions, you did come forward with a question.

I can tell you that right now Ontarians are currently diverting approximately three million tonnes of waste from our landfills per year. The people of this province are responding overwhelmingly in terms of the blue box, which was made province-wide by the government of David Peterson and has been expanded over the years to take many more materials to divert from landfills. More

has to be done, but we will require the support of the members of the opposition who've been trying to foist—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I just want to do a quick point—stop the clock for a moment, please.

I just want to quickly point out that yesterday, I did bring reference to the fact that I'd like you to continue to talk about your own policies, but the questions need to be about the government of the day. If you're going to reference your own party's previous history, it causes a problem for me. So I'm going to remind everybody again: Stay focused on the government business of the day.

The leader of the third party.

### CANCER TREATMENT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Ken Rodger is fighting for his life in Hamilton. On Friday, Ken will lose funding for the drug that is helping to save his life. He doesn't have the luxury to wait for the results of his appeal to the Exceptional Access Program and he doesn't have the means to pay out of pocket for the drug that's keeping him alive.

Will the minister intervene and give hope to Ken Rodger and his family?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** First, let me express my concern and my sympathy to this family, who are really fighting for life.

What I can tell you is that I am not familiar with this particular case. I will undertake to take a look, although I do have to stress that we do not politicize decisions about who gets what drug. But I will ensure that the proper steps have been taken to make sure that there is a resolution as quickly as possible.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The minister should be aware, because I sent her a letter about this about a month ago. I'll give it to a page to remind her and send it back to her right now.

Ken Rodger's brain tumour has dramatically shrunk since he started treatment, and that includes treatment with chemotherapy and Avastin. Ken's doctor believes that Avastin is in fact prolonging his life; it is shrinking his tumour.

Health Canada has approved the use of this drug for brain cancer, Avastin. British Columbia funds Avastin under its drug program as well, for this particular application. Will the minister reread that letter that I sent her a month ago and use her discretion to ensure that this life-saving treatment is not denied to Ken Rodger?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Of course I will reread the letter. Thank you for sending it over again. But I do have to be clear that I do not have discretion. Although there are some who would like the minister to be able to make decisions like this, we pass legislation in this House, Speaker, removing the politicization of coverage of drugs.

I think it was the right decision. In fact, I know it was the right decision. My job is to make sure that we have

sufficient funds in the drug envelope to cover drugs that are based in evidence.

I will ensure that all of the steps have been taken to make sure that this gets proper review.

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. As the minister responsible for women's issues noted yesterday, December 6 was the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. In my riding of Ottawa Centre and around the province, the tragic events that sparked this day of remembrance are top of mind, as are the steps that we can take to address violence against women. All women have the right to feel safe and secure in their own homes, and the government has a responsibility to help those fleeing violence.

Speaker, through you to the minister: After the cuts to violence against women programming made under the previous government, how has your ministry helped to rebuild and enhance the supports in place to help those escaping domestic violence?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'd like to thank the honourable member for raising this very important issue. It's particularly fitting, as he mentioned, in light of yesterday's anniversary and the statements that were made in this Legislature. Also, members may be aware that representatives of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses are here at Queen's Park with us today, and I certainly would like to thank them for their work and the work of their member organizations, for the work they do.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the steps that our government has taken in this area since 2003. In 2010-11, we provided over \$143 million to programs that help address domestic violence. That's a 49% increase since 2003. My ministry also provides funding to 96 agencies operating emergency shelters for those fleeing violence. In 2010-11, shelters served approximately 12,000 women and 8,000—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Minister, as you know, yesterday I introduced a private member's bill to help victims of domestic violence. If passed, this legislation will help victims of domestic abuse by allowing them to break their lease to escape from an abuser in a shorter time period than is now allowed.

1130

Minister, last week you spoke about the White Ribbon Campaign, a campaign that aims to mobilize men to talk about violence against women. I believe that everyone needs to stand up and work to eliminate violence against women. Through you, Mr. Speaker: Will the minister tell this House what is being done to fight sexual violence?

**Hon. John Milloy:** To the minister responsible for women's issues.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member for the question, and I also want to acknowledge the presence of OAITH here today. They were a partner in the development of our province's comprehensive domestic violence action plan. We have worked hard with many of our partners across the sector. Last year, I had the opportunity to continue that work and introduce and launch the province's sexual violence action plan.

Speaker, it's incumbent upon each of us, as has been said before—every day, women of all backgrounds and all ages across the province and country are victims of sexual violence and domestic violence. Our plan provides services for victims of sexual and domestic violence and helps them heal. We have increased funding, for example, to Ontario's 41 sexual assault centres, improved support for women who turn to our health care system, and invested in training. At the root of this is inequality, and each of us has a very important role to play—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. On November 22, a letter was delivered to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transportation in which they were advised of concerns relating to the awarding of a contract to implement an electronic fare card system in the TTC. Specifically, the letter questioned why the Ministry of Transportation, through its agency Metrolinx, was coercing the city of Toronto and the TTC to enter into the contract with Accenture. There was a competing bid that would have saved taxpayers \$300 million, and the technology was in fact an advanced technology.

Speaker, \$300 million was on the table. Knowing that this is in the works, I would ask the Premier: What steps will he take to ensure that we save the taxpayers \$300 million?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member for the question. We did have some discussion about it earlier.

We were very pleased to see that the TTC voted to adopt Presto as part of the MOU package back in June. On November 23, the TTC confirmed the use of the Presto card. In their report, the TTC staff said:

"With the TTC joining Presto, there would be benefits for interregional customers who could use one payment card on multiple systems throughout the GTA...."

"[O]nce the Presto system is fully operational ... TTC costs for fare collection could be reduced by up to \$10 million annually...."

The procurement that's referred to is really procurement that's within the purview of the city of Toronto and the TTC. They opted to go with the Presto card, having heard submissions from the alternative bid.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I don't understand why this government insists on turning a blind eye to such gross



mismanagement and why it takes the Auditor General to expose them from time to time for their mismanagement.

Here are the facts: City of Toronto councillors as well as commissioners of the TTC have stated categorically on the public record that the competing bid is superior and will save taxpayers \$300 million. It is also a fact that Metrolinx is coercing and threatening the TTC to withhold other infrastructure funding if they don't enter into this agreement. The minister has heard about that.

Will it take the Auditor General to expose yet one more time this kind of gross mismanagement and waste of tax dollars? I ask one more time: Will the government take the steps now to intervene and ensure that this waste of taxpayers' dollars will not—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, the facts are really quite clear. The TTC looked at an alternative type of card to Presto. They were operating under the MOU with the city of Toronto back in June. They further confirmed it, and they confirmed it on the basis that the deal with Metrolinx was a better financial deal for the city of Toronto, and they're moving forward on that basis.

Unlike the alternatives, Presto is proven and fully operational. Presto is in place on nine transit systems, with almost 100,000 users, and growing every week. Open payment systems like the alternative ACS Xerox is proposing are not currently fully operational in any major transit system anywhere.

Presto can also be used—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Thank you.

### SOLDIERS' REMAINS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Tourism and Culture. I again raise the issue of the reburial of the War of 1812 British, aboriginal and American soldiers' remains at Smith's Knoll. The minister keeps dodging my inquiries, saying that he's working on it, or that he needs a letter from the mayor, or that the funds can't be used for property purchase. I've already told the minister that the property was purchased with other funds. I've shown him a letter from former mayor Eisenberger requesting the \$200,000 in funding specific to this project.

Will this minister and this government stop hiding behind other funding allocations, stop mixing the requests with other funding, and deal with it as its own request right now?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you very much to the honourable member for his question.

I have engaged myself with the new mayor, not necessarily the past mayor. The member and I had a conversation. In numerous conversations, I have told him that I have sent a letter to the new mayor. I have engaged the new mayor to contact my ministry to further this situation.

I recognize the importance and the significance of the battle of Stoney Creek to the city of Hamilton. Smith's Knoll was the site of some of the fiercest fighting during the battle of Stoney Creek in the War of 1812.

The upcoming War of 1812 bicentennial offers Ontario a unique opportunity to celebrate our rich heritage and honour the sacrifices of Canadian heroes that helped define our national identity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I guess the cheque's in the mail.

The bicentennial of the War of 1812, the battle of Stoney Creek: June 5, 2013. The spring, summer and fall of 2012 are the last times when this excavation and re-interment can happen.

For months, this minister has made every excuse he can come up with to avoid answering why he has done nothing to correct this disrespectful condition of these soldiers' remains.

Will this government stop weaving and bobbing and finally commit to cutting a cheque right now for \$200,000 to get this specific reburial project under way and do the right thing by these honourable soldiers?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Only a few months away, there will be celebration of the War of 1812 across the province. It will be in Windsor; it will be in Niagara Falls; it will be in Hamilton; it will be in North Bay; it will be in Thunder Bay.

The War of 1812 bicentennial offers a unique opportunity to celebrate our rich heritage. Our government is proud to provide support to mark this important 200th anniversary. In the city of Hamilton, we have invested over \$145,000 for two projects in the arts, heritage and library sectors related to the bicentennial celebration.

I understand that the western corridor alliance has many exciting activities and events planned for the bicentennial, including the battle of Stoney Creek re-enactment.

### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Experts say that in the future, our economy will require that 70% of Ontarians have a post-secondary education. The good news is, we are already well on our way. Today Ontario has one of the highest levels of post-secondary education in the OECD. In fact, that's one of the key factors in our success in attracting jobs and investment. The recently opened Sheridan College Hazel McCallion campus, in my riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville, is another step in the right direction.

However, my constituents in my riding have raised concerns about continuing to make our post-secondary system responsive to the needs of students. Speaker, can the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities tell us how Sheridan College's Hazel McCallion campus will help us improve the quality of our education system and modernize the delivery of post-secondary—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister?

1140

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** First, Mayor McCallion has been a dear friend of mine for 25 years. Mississauga is home to powerful, bright women politicians. After December 6, it's great to have role models who are great hockey players and great mayors, and the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville represents that fine tradition of powerful role models for women. I'm honoured to sit with her.

To have a campus named after Mayor McCallion is extraordinary. This government has put its money where its mouth is in delivering more accessible education across Ontario and the GTA with \$15.6 million, 33 state-of-the-art classrooms and rebuilding the mayor's downtown revitalization, where we see the beautiful transformation of Mississauga.

The facility's state-of-the-art technology is allowing students both from Mississauga and across Ontario to produce a degree or diploma. Its technology platform and online learning will extend education opportunities to the hard-working community public, allowing all the people in Mississauga who are mid-career also to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Early today our leader Andrea Horwath asked a question of the Premier in regards to the ability for the government to call the auditor in in order to take a look at what happened and do a review on the power plants in Mississauga and Oakville. He suggested in his answer that the member herself can do that, and I want to, under standing order 23(j) and (m), say the following.

The public auditor's act is quite clear, and I read from section 17 of the act: "The Auditor General shall perform such special assignments as may be required"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member, that is not a point of order.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, I also rise on a point of order. If you bring your attention to section 23(j): "In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she:

"(j) Charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood."

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities said that the language is not in the report and that there is hyperbole. I would like to deliver to you, sir, to the Minister of Colleges, Training and Universities, to the table and to all the House leaders—from the government and to the two opposition House leaders—a copy of what I stated. It suggests as follows: "Further improvements are required to ensure compliance with the act, its regulations and ministry policies, and to better ensure that the ministry's primary objective of protecting students is met."

This is exactly what I said in my question, Mr. Speaker, which the minister suggested was hyperbole. So I'd like to table this for you, sir, and I demand an apology from that minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I also do not find that to be a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, on a further point of order: I just read from section 23 in the standing orders, subsection (m), and it clearly states, in any case where a member "introduces any matter in debate that in the opinion of" this House "offends the practices or precedents of the House." Clearly what the Premier did is to try to say that we in the opposition had the ability to order the auditor to go out and do the audit. That cannot be done. Only the cabinet can do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will reiterate my original belief: That is not a point of order.

If, however, anyone on an individual basis is not satisfied with their statement, they can correct their record. This is just simply a disagreement between two people, and it's not a point of order.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have a deferred vote on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The members take their seats, please.

On November 23, 2011, Mr. Hudak moved that the motion for the address in reply to the speech from the throne be amended by adding the following thereto:

"However, this House asks that the government create a legislated mandatory wage freeze to control the cost and size of government and reform apprenticeship ratios to create 200,000 jobs in the province of Ontario."

All those in favour of Mr. Hudak's amendment to the motion please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Fedeli, Victor  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Michael  
Hillier, Randy  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Rod

Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Leone, Rob  
MacLaren, Jack  
MacLeod, Lisa  
McDonnell, Jim  
McKenna, Jane  
McNaughton, Monte  
Miller, Norm  
Milligan, Rob E.  
Munro, Julia  
Nicholls, Rick  
O'Toole, John

Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Pettapiece, Randy  
Scott, Laurie  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Todd  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Walker, Bill  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakubski, John  
Yurek, Jeff

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed to the amendment to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.



**Nays**

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sorbara, Greg
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Craiton, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dameria, Dipika	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	McGuinty, Dalton	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**

The ayes are 37; the nays are 69.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the amendment to the motion lost.

We will now vote on the main motion.

On November 23, 2011, Mr. Coteau moved, seconded by Ms. Sandals, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

“To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.”

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1155 to 1156.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I did notice that even on his last day he wouldn’t let the members get away with anything that wasn’t traditional, so thank you, Wayne. Thank you.

All those in favour of Mr. Coteau’s motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet

Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sorbara, Greg
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Craiton, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dameria, Dipika	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	McGuinty, Dalton	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Harris, Michael	Milligan, Rob E.	Yakabuski, John
Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick	
Jackson, Rod	O’Toole, John	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 69; the nays are 37.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is therefore resolved that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

“To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us....”

There are no further votes. This house stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Until 3 p.m.; it’s Wednesday. I’m trying to get us out earlier.

*The House recessed from 1200 to 1500.*

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** It’s my honour and privilege this afternoon to introduce my family: my father, Raymond Milligan; my mother, Susan Milligan; my lovely wife, Rebecca; and my daughters Linda and Samantha Milligan.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the former member from Scarborough East, Mr. Steve Gilchrist, is blessing us here as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We always welcome former members to the House, and we thank him

for his service to Ontario. Welcome, on behalf of all of us.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce Allan and Wendy Hubley, from my riding of Carleton–Mississippi Mills. Allan is a city of Ottawa councillor. They have bravely come here today to share their family tragedy with people in the House, and have talked to many of the MPPs here. We'd like to thank them for being very brave about facing their troubles.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to members from Cambridge and Waterloo region who are interested in the child care issue that I'm bringing forward today. We have Lori Prospero and Kris Parsons from Owl Child Care Services. We have concerned parents Ashley Ross, Terry Bordman and Tara Walker, as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome. Further introductions?

Since there are no further introductions, it is now time for members' statements.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** This statement concerns teenage mental illness.

On October 15, 2011, Jamie Hubley lost his battle with mental illness, and he took his own life. Jamie was only 15 years old. His father, Allan, and mother, Wendy, are here with us today. Allan is a well-respected city of Ottawa councillor who lives in my riding.

Allan and his wife, Wendy, have been very brave about working toward raising awareness on how common depression is among teenagers and how more support is needed to help teenagers survive this terrible illness.

Mental illness in teenagers is an area of health care that has been sadly neglected. I ask the government—indeed, all members of this House—to increase the resources needed for mental health care professionals to effectively deal with this problem.

Parents need our help. Our young people need our help. It is time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you; a very poignant message.

I do have to remind our gallery guests that being here is the utmost respect to us and we appreciate you being here, but there will be no participation from the galleries, please.

Now, we'll carry on with members' statements.

### ABORIGINAL HOUSING

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Speaker, here we are, still in the same situation in Attawapiskat. We still have people who are living in tents. We still have people living in backyard sheds. And what we've got is that the federal gov-

ernment has decided to point the finger at the community and say it's their fault.

I just want, for the record, to refute some of what the federal government is saying, because I think it needs to be said. The federal government is trying to make the argument that somehow or other they've given this community some \$80 million and somehow the \$80 million has been misspent.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The federal government is playing fast with the numbers. What they're essentially saying is, "Over a five-year period, we give you an annual budget as a community to run your water, run your sewer and do all the things you've got to do to run the community," and they've totalled the money and said, "Look how bad they are: They've got \$80 million and somehow they've misspent the money."

Well, nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell you why. The federal government, through the Department of Indian Affairs, has to audit every dollar that's spent from that community and others, and the audit is passed, signed and accepted by the federal government. But what makes this even more bizarre, that community is under co-management. The federal government has imposed a co-management model on the community of Attawapiskat, which means to say that any dollars they spend have to be signed off and agreed by the co-manager, which means to say that the federal government is at the table when it comes to making all the expenditures.

So I just say to the federal government: Stop playing loose. We've got people living in backyard tents, we've got people living in backyard sheds, and when you start trying to blame the victims for what they find themselves in, it's a dark day in Canada.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Residents in my riding of Scarborough–Southwest have been calling my constituency office and are asking about our government's position on child care. I would like to take this opportunity today to talk about this very important issue.

Since 2003, our government has demonstrated its commitment to maintaining and enhancing child care services, because we know how important child care and early learning is for our children and for our families. Since 2003, child care funding in Ontario has gone up from \$532 million to \$869 million, an increase of 63%.

Mr. Speaker, let me explain where this money is going. Our government is investing over \$64 million per year to permanently fill the funding gap left by the federal government when it terminated the agreement on early learning and child care. We've created more than 22,000 new licensed non-profit child care spaces in the last five years.

Through our government's investments, nearly 43,000 more children are receiving fee subsidies every year. Our government has been committed to addressing the needs of our children, and will continue to do so in the years to come.



## ART TRUAX

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Last week, my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock lost a great man with the passing of Art Truax. Today is his funeral.

Art was the first mayor of the city of Kawartha Lakes and the last mayor of the former town of Lindsay. He was also an educator, sportsman and athlete who was inducted into the Lindsay sports hall of fame. He was a teacher, a vice-principal and principal at Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute, and a superintendent of schools with the Trillium Lakelands District School Board.

Over the past 10 years, Art fought a very public and courageous battle with cancer. Despite his illness he maintained a very active life, continuing his involvement with the Rotary Club, the Dream Ball and Kawartha Lakes Food Source, and served as the chair of the police service board until earlier this year. He also managed to golf as often as possible.

Over the last five years, he received close to 100 chemotherapy treatments, becoming an inspiration for other people in the community fighting serious illness.

People who knew him and worked with him universally say that he was a great leader for the community and a mentor for them personally. His passion and love for his community, family and friends was unwavering. He was a champion for those who he felt didn't have the same advantages that he did.

Art is survived by his wife of 54 years, Barb, two children and two grandchildren. My community mourns this great individual, and my sympathies go out to his family.

## ARGYLE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Today I would like to share with the members present some of the great work that's happening in my community.

On July 18, 2011, after many months of planning, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to launch the grand opening of the Argyle Business Improvement Association in London-Fanshawe.

Located in the heart of the Argyle retail and business district, the BIA is actively promoting a more vibrant, healthy business district through their hands-on efforts with local businesses.

Most recently, they initiated a relationship with Community Employment Services Fanshawe that will encourage retail businesses to access their many services.

They held their first annual Christmas party fundraiser. The event was well attended by business owners and staff, as well as Colours of London, CIBC, Forest of Flowers, Coulter's Pharmacy and Sutherland's Furniture. A silent auction was held, and proceeds from this incredible night will go to My Sisters' Place, a centre supporting homeless and troubled women in our neighbourhood.

## 1510

With the holiday season fast approaching, I am very pleased to share with you the new Cold Hands/Warm Hearts initiative. It is a mitten, hat and scarf drive for underprivileged children in my community.

I would like to thank Argyle BIA for their efforts. I applaud their hard work and look forward to working with them to promote local business and community in London-Fanshawe.

## CO-OP HOUSING

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm pleased to take the opportunity to recognize a milestone for an important organization based in my riding of Ottawa Centre and active in communities across all of eastern Ontario.

The Co-operative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario, or CHASEO for short, is celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2011. CHASEO's membership includes housing co-ops, co-op staff associations and sector-related organizations in the eastern Ontario region. They not only serve as a collective voice in eastern Ontario to represent co-ops' interests with government, agencies and other groups, but CHASEO also provides local resources, expertise and training that is instrumental in helping co-ops operate at their best.

A unique form of home ownership, housing co-operatives are incorporated, non-profit businesses formed by people who wish to provide and own their housing jointly. The people who live in the co-ops are its members. From the beginning they decide on the planning, design and day-to-day management of the co-op. Co-ops are an integral part of my community, Speaker, and of many communities across the province, and I am pleased to bring this to the attention of the House.

I would also like to offer congratulations to CHASEO's board of directors: president Tim Larmour, vice-president Angela Blais, treasurer Michelle Bainbridge, corporate secretary Daniel Monoogian, staff liaison Catherine Lee, directors Karen McQuarrie and Helen Friel, and acting managing director Mary Ann Schwering.

Congratulations to CHASEO on their 15th anniversary.

## ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What has happened to the lines on our highways in Ontario? It's plain to see—no pun intended—that the line marks on our highways have somehow become less visible. The obvious conclusion would be that the Ministry of Transportation has changed the specifications of the paint being used to mark the lines. On a dark, rainy night, they become next to impossible to distinguish from the blackness of the pavement.

Speaker, the primary reason for having line markings is safety. Safety is and should always be priority number one. The last two Sunday nights driving back to Toronto

have been rainy ones. On Highways 115 and 401, it was impossible to clearly see the lines in the rain. On a dark, rainy night, it's tougher driving when you can see the lines; when you can't see them, it's not a safe place to be.

My constituents and the people across Ontario need to know why the ministry has changed the specifications of this paint and what is going to be done to correct it.

I must thank my constituent Al Donohue from Pembroke for raising this issue with me and also for pointing out that there is an increasing number of seniors who will no longer drive at night because of this problem.

I have raised the issue with the Minister of Transportation, and he has assured me that they're looking into it. As safety must be the number one priority of his ministry, I expect he will get back to me in the very near future.

Speaker, highway safety is something that cannot be compromised, and every step must be taken to ensure that the markings on our highways are visible under all conditions, not just on clear days.

#### COLIN RICKARDS

**Mr. Mike Colle:** On November 24 this year, Colin Rickards, one of Canada's iconic authors and journalists, passed away. Colin was a columnist with Canada's largest Caribbean newspaper, the Caribbean Camera, for 15 years and was one of Canada's leading authorities on Caribbean affairs and history.

Colin was born in England and eventually served in the Royal Air Force. In England, he chose to focus his attention on the Caribbean and worked as a correspondent for newspapers in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guyana, Antigua and St. Lucia. He travelled throughout the Caribbean and Central America and was one of the world's foremost experts on Caribbean history and politics.

He wrote a number of very outstanding books on everything from the great Crimean War to the Wild West in the United States and its heroes.

For 14 years, he worked as the editor of Caribbean Business News and the West Indies and Caribbean Yearbook. He worked at Share magazine here in Toronto, Pride, the Caribbean Camera and Contrast. He appeared on CTV and CBC as an expert on everything Caribbean; he was known as a walking encyclopedia of everything Caribbean. He truly loved the Caribbean, he loved its people, and he connected the Caribbean to Canada in the great bridge that he built between those two great peoples.

We're going to miss you, Colin. Rest in peace.

#### MUSIC EDUCATION

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm proud to stand here today and add my voice to the growing chorus in my riding calling for music education to have a higher priority in Ontario's elementary schools.

I want to take a moment to praise two women from my riding who have been instrumental in raising this issue. Dr. Denise Bowes and Joy Goodfellow are both members of the Brockville and Area Music and Performing Arts Hall of Fame, and they understand the value of music education. I was pleased to meet with them recently with our Ontario PC education critic, the member for Nepean—Carleton. Mr. Speaker, we were both inspired by their passion to ensure a generation of children don't miss out on the experience of enriching their lives by learning the subject from a qualified music teacher.

Beyond the value of fostering a lifelong love for music and the arts, we know that music instruction is strongly linked to overall student success. Sadly, for too many children in our province, this opportunity is disappearing. Indeed, a 2010 Coalition for Music Education study found that 58% of Ontario elementary schools do not have a qualified music teacher.

This weekend I will be launching a petition to support the initiative, and those interested can also give a message of encouragement and find out more by visiting the Save Music in our Schools Facebook page. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Denise and Joy, and it's my sincere hope that the Minister of Education and the administration and trustees of the Upper Canada District School Board are tuned in to their important words.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

Mr. Yakabuski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities / *Projet de loi 27, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard des remboursements de la taxe sur l'essence similaires consentis aux municipalités par le ministre.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** This bill amends the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. If the minister, under section 116 of the act, enters into an agreement with a municipality to provide a rebate of tax under the Gasoline Tax Act to the municipality for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating a rapid transit or public transportation system, the minister shall not refuse to enter into an agreement to provide a rebate



of tax under that act to any municipality for a purpose related to public highways under the jurisdiction of the latter municipality. The amount of the rebate that the latter municipality receives shall be based on the number of inhabitants in the municipality and the total distance of public highways under the jurisdiction of the municipality.

## REGISTERED HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LES PROFESSIONNELLS EN RESSOURCES HUMAINES INSCRITS

Mr. Zimmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association / Projet de loi 28, Loi concernant l'Association des professionnels en ressources humaines.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

1520

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm reintroducing this bill. It was introduced in the 39th Parliament. It received second reading at that time, but unfortunately we concluded the Parliament before we had an opportunity to reach this.

The bill provides for self-regulation of human resource professionals here in Ontario. Human resource professionals in Ontario play an enormous role in ensuring that Ontario has the very, very best employment practices, that those practices are at the leading edge, and that those practices are conducted in such a way that it attracts industry to Ontario and keeps industry in Ontario. The human resources profession has a reputation for developing with employers the very best employment practices.

I'm joined today in the Speaker's gallery by Bill Greenhalgh, who's the CEO, and Scott Allinson and Claude Balthazard, who are senior executives with the Human Resources Professionals Association.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. We welcome our guests.

## PROTECTION OF CHILD CARE CENTRES ACT (EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS), 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA PROTECTION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS (PROGRAMMES DE JOUR PROLONGÉ)

Mr. Leone moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Education Act in respect of extended day programs / Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les programmes de jour prolongé.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** This bill provides for an amendment to the Education Act to allow third party child care providers to have a grandfather clause: if they were in operation as of September 1, 2011, that they continue to be in operation in school boards.

Waterloo region is currently the only region that doesn't have a school board—an agreement with third party providers with respect to child care and the seamless day program.

I hope this bill addresses those concerns of parents in my riding and in Waterloo region.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It now time for petitions. The member for Durham.

## PETITIONS

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and we're all looking forward to tomorrow.

I have a petition from my riding of Durham which reads as follows:

"Whereas Solray Energy Corp. has given notice of its proposal for a class 3 solar power facility known as Epsom Solar Farm to be located in the township of Scugog; and

"Whereas the site is on prime", class 1, "farmland that has been in production for many generations; and

"Whereas we consider productive farmland to be of vital importance to farm and rural communities by providing healthy, locally grown food and ensuring the sustainability of Canada's food supply; and

"Whereas class 1 to 5 farmland should be protected from the current proposal and similar projects that may be considered in the future; and

"Whereas other sites of less value to agriculture are better locations for solar power developments;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature not to allow large, industrial wind or solar farms on prime agricultural land, and we further express our support for giving local communities, through their elected municipal councils the power to ... approve large-scale renewable energy developments."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, along with other members here.

### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to introduce this petition that was brought to me by Adel Mian, Megan Spasevski, Twee Tran, Amarna Moscote, Vera

Kevic and Jessica Merroli, who are in the gallery with us today.

The petition consists of 3,000 postcards, and they read as follows:

"Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada that continues to subject all landed immigrants to a waiting period to access government health insurance coverage;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately reform existing health care legislation and policies, and specifically eliminate the three-month wait period eligibility requirement that is part of the Ontario Health Insurance Plan to ensure that all landed immigrants residing in Ontario have access to health care services free of charge. This is in accordance with Ontario's recognition, under the Ontario Human Rights Code, of the importance of the equality of service to its residents.

"Article 1 of the code states: 'Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability.'

"Landed immigrants contribute to this province's growth and prosperity and must be afforded the equal protection that they rightly deserve."

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask our strong pages—and they would be Christian, Daniel and Andrew—to bring it to the clerks' table.

#### JOB RELOCATION

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the federal government is moving 10,000 jobs from the downtown of ... Ottawa to Kanata;

"Whereas about half of those employees live in Orléans;

"Whereas the commutes of these jobs will be over one hour for Orléans commuters, compared to 20 minutes to the present Department of National Defence offices downtown;

"Whereas this action by the Harper government will make our city less sustainable;

"Whereas Orléans has only 0.5 jobs per household, compared to 1.65 jobs per household in Kanata;

"Whereas this action runs counter to the city of Ottawa's official plan by promoting urban sprawl as opposed to densification;

"Whereas the overall costs of this move of 10,000 jobs to Kanata have never been fully costed;

"Whereas no environmental assessment or consultation was carried out with the affected communities;

"We, the undersigned, petition the assembly of Ontario to request that the Legislature evaluate the actions of the federal government to see if the environmental

assessment legislation of the federal and provincial governments was followed; and

"Furthermore, that the Legislature investigate the total cost of a purely political decision by the federal government."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this and send it forward with Yousef.

#### MALE BREAST CANCER

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by a great number of people around Ontario.

"Whereas, each year, an estimated 45 men will die from male breast cancer in Canada, a number that is expected only to increase; and

"Whereas breast cancer is widely believed to be a disease specific to women, and due to a general lack of awareness that men can also develop breast cancer, men are typically diagnosed at a late stage; and

"Whereas promoting awareness and education about male breast cancer is crucial to improving the health and well-being of men throughout Ontario, facilitating earlier detection, improving the prognosis of men who have been diagnosed with the disease and ultimately preventing further loss of life; and

"Whereas, in remembrance of the many men who have lost their lives or are fighting for their lives,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the third week of October be designated as Male Breast Cancer Awareness Week in Ontario."

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I've got a few petitions from a couple of hundred people. They read:

"Whereas 700 affordable TCHC homes are in danger of being sold off to the private sector;

"Whereas the sell-off will reduce the diversity of neighbourhoods and lead to an increasingly divided Toronto;

"Whereas the sell-off will further reduce the inadequate supply of affordable housing for the 80,000 households already waiting for affordable housing;

"Whereas the sell-off will require the displacement of thousands of men, women and children from their homes, schools and communities;

"Whereas there are a range of other options to deal with the repair shortfall that exists, including drawing on Infrastructure Ontario loan funds, seeking support from higher levels of government, investing in retrofits to reduce utility costs, and partnering with non-profit and co-op housing providers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:



“We urge the Minister of Housing not to approve the sale of the TCHC units, but instead to work with the city of Toronto and TCHC to explore more just, sustainable and economically viable ways to address the repair backlog in TCHC’s scattered housing stock.”

Speaker, I support this petition very strongly.

1530

## WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** “Whereas we, the neighbouring residents of the proposed CAW turbine site, believe that we have been misled during the CAW’s public hearing processes; and

“Whereas new documented scientific evidence concerning infrasound and its health effects on people has come to our attention and into the public domain since these hearings; and

“Whereas we believe that had we and our municipality been informed that the CAW turbine would be a for-profit business enterprise and not a generator of electricity solely for the CAW Family Education Centre, as advertised, we would have vigorously opposed this project; and

“Whereas the proposed turbine does not comply with either the government setback of 550 metres nor the town’s policy of 2,000 metres, both designed to protect people’s health and safety, and the health and safety of people are in jeopardy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the MOE as follows:

“To immediately halt the construction of the CAW wind turbine, revoke the CAW’s permit and conduct an open and fair public hearing that gives Port Elgin residents a democratic opportunity to have their quality-of-life, health and safety concerns heard.”

I fully support this petition, I will affix my signature to it, and I will ask Miss Alli to run it to the table.

## TRANSFERT D’EMPLOIS

**M. Phil McNeely:** « Pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que la communauté d’Orléans va être durement touchée par le déplacement de 10 000 emplois du centre-ville vers Kanata;

« Attendu que le déplacement de l’emploi de l’est vers l’ouest va forcer de nombreux habitants à s’installer dans la région de Kanata et la valeur des propriétés, qui a déjà chuté d’environ 5 %, baissera davantage;

« Attendu que le Fonds de développement de l’Est de l’Ontario est destiné à aider les entreprises à créer de nouveaux emplois et à investir dans de nouvelles technologies, équipements et formation professionnelle;

« Attendu que le Fonds de développement de l’Est de l’Ontario a aussi comme objectif de soutenir des projets économiques qui attireront et conserveront les investissements au sein des entreprises ontariennes et des communautés;

« Attendu que le gouvernement de l’Ontario s’est engagé à maintenir le programme du Fonds de développement de l’Est de l’Ontario au-delà des quatre ans prévus;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que la législation s’assure que le Fonds de développement de l’Est de l’Ontario étende sa zone géographique d’admissibilité pour inclure Orléans, afin d’encourager la croissance des emplois dû à l’impact désastreux de la décision fédérale sur la viabilité de l’ensemble de la région à l’est de la ville d’Ottawa, et surtout d’Orléans. »

Je vais mettre ma signature ici, monsieur le Président, et l’envoyer avec Carolyn.

## WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I agree with this petition, and I’m signing it.

## DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s nice to be recognized by the Speaker.

I am happy to present this petition from the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Nickel Belt, there was a large group of people standing. That’s why we missed the rotation. Thank you for your comment.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You’re most welcome.

I have this petition from the family of Mr. Sam Bruno, as well as the patrons from Società Caruso, better known as the Caruso Club, in Sudbury.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making" PET scanning "a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Laibah to bring it to the Clerk.

### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "Petition to Save Duntroon Central Public School and All Other Rural Schools in Clearview Township.

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will sign this.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm very pleased to table this petition, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Waterloo Region District School Board ... proposes to implement a before- and after-school child care program in their schools for children ages four to seven years, effective September 2012;

"Whereas the board intends to prohibit all daycare centres currently partnered with schools from continuing to provide the same services;

"Whereas the board intends to charge \$27 per day for the same services that the YWCA charges \$16 per day;

"Whereas the implementation of such a program would result in the loss of revenue for the daycare centres currently partnered with schools, further resulting in either a fee increase to child care services for children three years and under (\$1,500 plus per month) or the complete closure of child care programs for children three years and under;

"Whereas the result would be to create a crisis in child care for parents in this region who require good-quality, affordable child care for their children three and under, which already suffers from a severe shortage of such services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas we are seeking that the board either cease to implement such a program or implement a hybrid approach wherein existing daycare centres partnered with schools will be allowed to continue to provide before- and after-school care at rates set by them, and the board may operate before- and after-school care in schools which do not have on-site daycare centres;

"Whereas should the board refuse to implement either approach;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation amending the Education Act and the Day Nurseries Act so as to protect our valuable and vulnerable child care spaces and affordability from the above actions of the Waterloo Region District School Board."

Mr. Speaker, I have about a thousand names on this petition. I'm happy to sign this petition as well and deliver it to page Aidan to be tabled.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 6, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre



en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I believe the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London left off.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Speaker: I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 24(c), the member for Northumberland–Quinte West may speak for 20 minutes on the motion for second reading of Bill 2 and that the official opposition be skipped in the next following rotation of debate on the bill.

1540

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Agreed? Agreed.

The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just finishing off where we left off yesterday, I was talking to the bill, the healthy homes renovation tax credit, which is created to help those 65 and older get a 15% tax credit on renovations to their house up to a maximum of \$10,000.

I first made the point, just to reiterate, that the tax bill isn't really going to hit the 1.8 million seniors that the government is proposing. In fact, a lot of the seniors out there 65 to, I would say, between 75 and 77 don't need renovations; they're in perfectly good health and there's no way they could plan at that time what their needs are going to be in the future. So, really, you're getting a smaller portion of the population that this tax credit is going to benefit. My proposal is: Let's try to get relief for all of the citizens, all the people in Ontario, and let's get behind removing the HST from heating—and hydro, while we're at it.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's already off 10%.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Well, let's take the HST on top of the 10% that's already off. I think that would be a great idea.

The other problem is the cost. The costs have not been outlined to how much this program is really going to cost. They're estimating maybe \$60 million by March, but what is a year going to cost? It hasn't been costed out, and I think the programs that the government is going to take from this point on should be fully costed out so we know how our money is being spent, so that there are no surprises at the end of the year and so we can stop running \$16-billion deficits and get our budget in order. Because if we don't watch our spending, health care is next to be cut, education is going to be cut and the Ministry of the Environment will be cut.

The CCACs—these people who need these renovations need the services from the CCACs in order to stay in their home. It's not enough just to build structures in their houses: they need the services; they need nursing care; they need companionship; they need laundry—whatever they need to stay in their houses. I think that's where the money should be filtered. If you really, really need to spend this \$60 million, put it into health care so they can strengthen our CCACs. Put it into surgery time so that we can get more surgeries done, and so those people who are sitting at home suffering, needing these

renovations, can actually get on and have a better quality of life and enjoy life.

One other point I wanted to make note of is also for surgeries—I'm sorry; it's just getting the deficit under control.

There were points made earlier about dementia and people at home with dementia: These renovations aren't going to help people with dementia. Those people need more structured care. Again, going back to the CCACs and working with the local Alzheimer's societies, it's getting those people to come into the house and helping those people with dementia. Putting up a grab bar is not going to help anyone with dementia. We need to relook at our position on how we treat people with dementia.

In closing, Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today and yesterday on this tax credit bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Speaker, it's unfortunate that I missed much of his presentation yesterday, but what I hear, I like, by way of the concerns he raises—the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I love these new guys here. They're friendly. They want to work with others. They're sincere. It's just beautiful to see. God bless.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The older ones, I don't know. But the younger ones: God bless.

He raises a couple of good concerns, because I raised them myself just the other day. Imagine: We are renovating their homes, and only up to 1% of the public is likely to take that program on, and it will be only the wealthy. But he raises a good point: What seniors really need in order to stay in their homes—yes, in part, renovations, and indeed the majority of people who need it won't be able to do it. But he also makes the point that what they need is adequate home care, which is a point I think he made, or would have liked to have made, in addition to the other points he made. That is indeed a big, big point. People need home care, and without it, they can't live in their homes.

I know that the Minister of the Environment understands this, because he's been here longer than I have. I know he's got a whole lot of seniors in his home town who are indeed working poor, and if they're not working, they are indeed poor and can't afford to make those renovations. So I know that he was very attentive to your comments in terms of how and what it is that we need to do to make sure that seniors have the services to indeed stay at home.

So I'm sympathetic to the many arguments you have made about this particular bill, and while this bill helps some people—the very wealthy, God bless—it will not help the majority of people who desperately need it. I appreciate your comments.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to offer my comments after hearing the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London on this very important bill, Bill 2, a new piece of legislation that is going to add to the long list of pro-



grams that are making life easier for seniors in Ontario. Sure, this will not be for everyone; we know that. The federal program that allowed many improvements to homes—well, this is much better than new kitchens and new renovations like pools etc.

This is targeted to the Aging at Home strategy, which is a big part of this government's legislation to help seniors. I am sure that we're going to find that a good number of seniors are able to take advantage of this program, are able to prepare for aging at home, retirement in their own home, rather than going to the other options that are available. And this 15% reduction makes it more affordable. It's an incentive. It's going to allow people to do the planning for their retirement, to get their homes ready. It will spread the word about aging at home, all the advantages of aging at home. It will be an assist to many seniors.

So I'm very pleased, as a senior myself, to look ahead—I want to stay in my own home all my life. I think that this is a great way to look forward, that if something happens that you're going to need a lift or you're going to need different adjustments to your home, you're able to do it, and this is an incentive. This will help. I thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker. Thanks for the comments from the member from Trinity–Spadina—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Oh, sorry. I jumped up too early, Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Did I jump up too early?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I think you jumped up out of order there.

Questions and comments? Seeing none—okay, the member from Welland.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you, Speaker. I have to agree with a lot of the previous speakers with respect to this bill, that it's not going to affect a large percentage of seniors in our communities, including my community. They don't need home renos until later in life, and so it's going to affect those people who are in their later 70s and into their 80s, and many of them aren't going to want to invest in their homes at that point in their life.

In my riding, there are many seniors who live in poverty and they don't have the \$10,000 to even try to get a \$1,500 tax decrease, so it is not going to work for many seniors where I live. But I have had calls from many seniors who need help with getting their roof fixed, they need help with their home heating bills, they need some new windows and doors, they've got a leaky basement, and they don't have the money to fix those things. And so this bill doesn't do anything for those seniors who are struggling to stay in their homes and need home renovations unrelated to the aging process.

They need more health services. They need more housekeeping services. They need somebody who might help them with meal prep, somebody who might shovel

their snow for them in the winter. Maybe they need a bus pass and they need some relief on their bus pass, or they need a ride to a medical appointment. They might need their stoves and fridges cleaned, because that's a heavy job to do for a senior. So I think that there are many seniors who really will not take advantage of this bill; a very small percentage may, and I think that that money would be better spent looking after a large segment of the senior population. Thank you, Speaker.

1550

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'd ask that the House leaders—it's kind of hard on the Speaker when three different people stand up, and it's out of rotation, and sometimes not in their seats. It's difficult to remember the ridings as it is. So could we certainly help out the old Speaker here? A little bit of organization would be nice. Thank you.

The member from York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It is a pleasure to add a few comments in two minutes on the presentation by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Speaker, let me add to the information, especially for the new members here. Seniors already enjoy, thanks to the Liberal government, a good number of benefits. Let me inform the House which ones they are, adding to the existing Bill 2, which we are debating today.

We have the Ontario senior homeowner property tax grant of \$625 for eligible homeowners. We have the Ontario energy and property tax credit, which is available for those who own or rent: \$900 a year in tax relief up to a maximum of \$1,025.

We already have another permanent sales tax credit of \$260 per year, which is available for every adult with a low or middle income. There is 10% off your hydro bills already, which has been in place for some time. And 93% of Ontarians will pay less personal income tax, saving another \$355 a year. Moreover, 90,000 Ontarians will not pay any personal provincial taxes, and that includes a lot of seniors with low or middle income.

The new home health care strategy includes a program consisting of house calls at a home by doctors or nurses. If a senior gets sick, there are also eight weeks where a family member can look after them. And the bill that we are debating now adds another \$1,500 that they can avail—so I hope this will pass.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London has a two-minute response.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker, and I'm very sorry for messing things up for you earlier. I was too ambitious to speak again.

I'd like to thank the members from Trinity–Spadina and Ottawa–Orléans, the member from Welland and the member from York West for their comments. It's true, we're here to work together and get things done. The blue stripe on the NDP sign that I mentioned yesterday is a good way of showing us that you're coming to the right way. Thank you.

*Interjections.*



**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Yes. I would like to add, though, that it's the people who suffer who use medical devices at home that have to plug in and use electricity to keep them running, like oxygen, like I mentioned yesterday. These people are struggling to pay. I've had numerous people stop me in St. Thomas and tell me, "What are you going to do about my oxygen? I have to run it all day." They just started with the time-of-use rates in St. Thomas, so they're now paying the maximum amount during the day when their medical devices have to run.

If they just want to focus on a small portion of society to give them a tax break, let's take that money and give these people who need medical devices running during the day, using up the high energy prices, a benefit or a tax credit or something on their energy bills so it's more affordable for them to stay in their homes. That, I think, is going to be a better solution than just focusing on one small pattern of people who can't really afford to do these renovations in the first place.

Thanks again for letting me speak over the last couple of days, and have a nice day.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** It is a great honour and privilege to be elected to this House to represent the Welland riding constituents, following 36 years of vigilant and vigorous representation, and passionate representation, by Mel Swart, followed by Peter Kormos. Mel represented the Welland riding for around 13 years, and he was a tireless champion for social justice and for public auto insurance. He also called for the resignation of Bob Rae—who is now a Liberal—

**Interjection:** And always was.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Well, maybe he always was—over the abandonment of the public auto insurance plan. We were talking about that this morning, and unfortunately that didn't happen.

He was one of the Niagara region's most loved and notable politicians. Mel wasn't just interested in being here and representing people in the House. He had a long list of charities that he worked for in his community and my community, raising funds for all kinds of causes.

Peter Kormos, my friend, a mentor, was a cabinet minister under the NDP government, and he held the House leader position most recently. A well-respected member and a vigilant advocate for everyday folks not only in our riding but across the province of Ontario, he'll be missed by his constituents, he'll be missed by his caucus, and he'll be missed by me. I'm sure there are people here sitting listening today who will also miss him. I've heard the comment over the last few days that there's something missing here, and it's Peter. Peter's not here with us.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** But we have Cindy now.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** But you have me now; that's right.

It was a privilege to have known and worked with both of them—and I see the member from Niagara Falls over there applauding.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Welland. Now, Welland is a unique riding. Where the member from St. Catharine's actually gets away with only one city—St. Catharine's, in his riding—I have five. I have part of St. Catharine's, and then I have Thorold, Welland, Wainfleet and Port Colborne. I want to thank them for their support, the constituents in that riding. I want to thank them not just for supporting me in this election but for 17 years. This was my seventh election in politics: several terms on city council, one as the mayor of Welland and two elections at a regional level. The people of Welland supported me through all of those. Even though some are suggesting that I jumped ship—that's a minority of the population. But they've supported me through all of those elections.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** You were a great regional councillor.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you, the member from St. Catharine's.

So I am truly humbled to once again have the support and the trust of the Welland riding constituents to represent you as your MPP. You have given me many opportunities over the years to grow and to learn, and I will continue to work hard on behalf of all of you at Queen's Park for betterment of the quality of life in Niagara, in the Welland riding and across the province.

I also want to thank the hundreds of volunteers, friends, unions, family members—including my 85-year-old mother, who's going to be 86 in January, who cooked a meal almost every day for hundreds of volunteers in my office. She couldn't deliver leaflets any more, but she could certainly still cook. She would cook, then she'd call them up, they'd come and pick it up, and she'd feed the troops. So it was very good.

The people on my campaign worked tirelessly during the election campaign, and your commitment and dedication to the campaign and to communicating the NDP message so eloquently at the doors and on the phones is why we had a successful end result in our riding.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Did Willy work on your campaign?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Yes, he did, actually, Willy Noiles, a reporter from St. Catharine's.

To the youth: There was a lot of youth working in my campaign. I know a number of the new members have talked about the youth in the campaigns, and it was so great to see. We had so much fun and so much energy that it inspired many of us who are older to push longer into the days and the evenings of the campaign.

To Mike Grimaldi, my campaign manager: You couldn't ask for a better campaign manager. He has worked for every provincial campaign in the Welland riding. He also has worked many federal campaigns over the years, and Mike only gets better with each and every campaign.

Speaker, to Brian, my husband of 35 years, actually, a couple of weeks ago, who has been my best friend and supporter—

*Applause.*



1600

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thirty-five years: That is like five times the national average. And he made it relatively easy for me over the last 17 years to actually be in politics, so I thank him for that.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** He does the cooking at home, does he?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** He does, and some cleaning; as well, he looks after the cat, yes.

To Andrea Horwath and our staff team for candidate support and for a great campaign that led to an NDP caucus of 42% women—and I don't know whether anybody can boast those numbers.

I come from a working-class family. My father was a steelworker; he worked at what used to be the former Page-Hersey—it's now Lakeside Steel—in Welland. I have seven brothers and sisters. My parents emigrated from Nova Scotia after the war—so, a hard-working, working-class family. My dad is no longer alive, but he'd be very proud to see me standing here representing the New Democrats.

I'm also a registered nurse, for almost four decades. Health care has always been a priority for me and, in fact, the best, most satisfying job that I ever had in my entire life. Every day I returned home from a 12-hour shift and I felt like I had accomplished something at the end of that day for someone. It was a feeling that I had improved somebody's life or some family member's life in the process. But my front-line years are long ago. That was when the health care system had patient care front and centre. Beds were available for patients in need. Patients had confidence in their community hospitals, and nurses, allied professionals and health care workers felt respected by their communities and by their employers.

I've been advocating for improved patient care for the last 20 years through my work with the Ontario Nurses' Association. My riding's hospital is currently under review by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. There is a supervisor appointed there.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Jim.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** And the member from St. Catharines has certainly been involved in that.

I'm eager to use this opportunity to work with the Niagara region, the Niagara Health System and the members from Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Niagara West—Glanbrook to ensure that we have positive results for the patients across the Niagara peninsula.

We're in a minority government, and it's clear that the electorate's message was to work together to get results for Ontarians, so I'm looking forward to working in that way to get some results.

My riding has faced many challenges over the last decade, with many factory closings and jobs moving to other provinces, other countries. Some of these factories had millions of dollars in taxes invested to expand or renew, but they turned their backs on their communities and on their workers and they moved those jobs to Mexico and to the United States. This is why the NDP plan to ensure corporate tax breaks and incentives are

tied to jobs is important. We need to rebuild our manufacturing sector and the economy.

So I urge the government to consider all of the debate around this seniors' tax credit and to use those seniors' tax credit dollars in a way that will support many seniors in our communities, as opposed to a small minority of them.

I look forward to working with all of you over the next four years in the best interests of seniors and of all the people in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about myself and talk about my campaign and to thank my constituents.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I enjoyed the member's remarks on this bill. They were very, very good. We allow a lot of flexibility in the House, as you should, Speaker; you've done an excellent job. I want to compliment you. By the way, you look very distinguished in that chair. Even though you're not wearing robes, you still look very distinguished in that chair.

I want to compliment the member on her speech that we just had at the present time. She made reference to a couple of her predecessors, who I've had the pleasure of working with previously: Mel Swart, who used to actually get a ride home with me from time to time when we were here in Toronto and coming home on a Friday, because the House sat on Friday mornings—only I had to bring all the props that Mel had with him. I had to put them in the back seat or the trunk of the car at that time. And of course I had an opportunity as well to work with Peter Kormos, one of your predecessors.

Mr. Speaker, what we've done in the Niagara peninsula, which I think is very good: There are matters of policy where we differ, but when it comes to defending the interests of the Niagara peninsula, you'll find the members from the three different political parties—the member for Niagara Falls and I, who are Liberals; the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook, who is a Conservative; and, of course, the member for Welland, who is a New Democrat. I think that works exceedingly well.

There was something I was thinking of, because I had a newspaper in front of me, and the member would agree with me—of course, I'll be in complete trouble now, so don't worry; you won't get in trouble. Wouldn't it be nice if these newspapers all bought recycled newsprint from the Resolute mill—it used to be called the Abitibi-Bowater mill? It would probably keep that mill going forever if the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Sun and many others bought recycled newsprint. Now, I expect about five nasty editorials, after chastising them for not doing so, but I know that my good friend the member from Welland would be in complete agreement, as would Willy Noiles, who is sitting in the gallery at the present time cheering you on.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I really commend the member from Welland, a former mayor, on her remarks—her ser-



vice to her community is commendable—and also recognize as well, although I did not know Mel Swart personally; I knew of his reputation at that time. But more recently, of course, Peter Kormos—I think we were all surprised when he didn't run again, quite frankly. He really was the chief legal adviser on both sides of the House when we had these points of order.

I was impressed as well that your accomplishments are quite notable, but you express them and your work in such a humble way, as a nurse or as a family person. It's quite genuine, and I hope you continue to bring that lack of cynicism to everything you do in here. But also, more importantly, your mother is part of what you respect, and it's probably why you're here, I guess—86 years old and still making great meals for her family and your friends is notable.

I think the only critical thing, not from your perspective, but of the government—I think you handled it very well, as well, by saying that the investments they've made, the economic development plan of Dalton McGuinty isn't working. They've put the money in and the jobs move to Mexico. If you look generally at Navistar and other investments they've made in Ontario, as well as what the Auditor General said this week about green energy, auto insurance, which Mel Swart [*inaudible*] people, they haven't fixed anything. The hospitals are in trouble, children's aid is in trouble, every single thing you talk about is in trouble.

They've been in government for eight years, and for people like you—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Eight long years.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** —eight long years, the point being: Now they are even disrespectful to the Auditor General of Ontario. They're ignoring his advice. I can't wait until the report comes in from Don Drummond to say that there's a structural deficit over there and they're spending the money of all the people of Ontario. It's future debt.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you, Speaker. First, I would like to congratulate my colleague the member from Welland on her maiden speech. I would also like to share the member opposite's comments with respect to my colleague's humility on her accomplishments and the way she presented them—the fact that she presented them in a manner to downplay them.

I'm honoured to share her experience as a colleague. She was mayor of Welland—and I'm sure that will add a richness to our caucus—and she's filling some large shoes, replacing Mr. Kormos. Hopefully together, you as the new member from Welland and me as a former criminal defence lawyer, maybe we could join our talents and our skills and replace the irreplaceable Mr. Kormos—hopefully.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Kormos in the hallway—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I met him somewhere else.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'm sure my colleague from the party opposite can share that story with me off the record at some point.

I was impressed with Mr. Kormos. He had a passion for defending the rights of the people of Ontario that I hope to emulate as well. I know my colleague from Welland will also keep that spirit alive—that fire, that passion to fight for Ontarians. That's really what we're here to do.

I wish you the best of luck in the upcoming session and I hope that, together, we can really keep that spirit, that fight for the rights of the people of Ontario alive and continue that fight as long as we're given the honour to do so. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

1610

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I also want to congratulate you on your re-election, if I may, as Speaker. Yes, you look very well, especially when you wear your official dress—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** And a very expensive tie.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** —and a very expensive tie. But at the same time also, I would like to congratulate the member from Welland and the presentation that she has made on Bill 2.

As well, Speaker, I share the sentiment from my friend the Minister of the Environment on the former colleague that she took over from, Peter Kormos, who has been a member, a dean of the House here. We had grown accustomed to his wonderful, colourful presentations. So when you have a chance, say hello on my behalf, and I welcome you as well.

As we had a chance to mention before, this bill is just an addition to the several benefits that Ontario seniors enjoy now. Of course, no particular benefits may ever be of assistance to all the seniors at all times, but let me just mention some of them.

At the moment, there is a \$625 benefit from the Ontario senior homeowner property tax grant. There is the Ontario energy property tax credit, which is available to those who own or rent: \$900 in tax relief up to a maximum of \$1,025 yearly, based on income. There is a permanent tax credit of \$265 per year, 10% off your hydro bills to offset the hydro increases.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Trinity–Spadina would like to sit in his seat, if he wants to make comments.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Can I claim the extra—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Ten seconds. Go ahead.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Ten seconds. Mr. Speaker, the best thing that we could do as a government is to support this particular bill as it adds more money into the pockets of our seniors. I hope that the opposition will support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Welland has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you to the member from St. Catharines, the member from Durham—where was the member from Durham?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Right there.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Right there.

**Interjection:** No.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** He's right there. He's not there, but he's right there.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Oh, he was there. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton and the member from York West, thank you for your comments.

I spent a lot of time over the years with both Mel and Peter. I worked Mel's last election campaign and I worked probably all of Peter's election campaigns over the years. They're both very great men who are very compassionate about their communities and about social justice.

On the issue of seniors, my own mother, who I talked about a few minutes ago, lives in her own apartment. It's a private sector apartment. She wouldn't be able to take advantage of any tax credit for anything in her unit, and I doubt that her landlord would be prepared to do anything in her unit to assist her in staying there when she isn't able to live there any longer. But she does need things like rides to medical appointments, and even with seven kids, occasionally, somebody can't get her to Hamilton, where the services are specialized, so she has to take a \$50 or \$60 hit to get a ride to Hamilton and back. So I think that there needs to be some more flexibility in this seniors' tax credit so that more seniors will be able to take advantage across the province.

Once again, thanks for the opportunity to speak, and I look forward to working with all of you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased this afternoon to have 10 minutes to speak on the senior healthy homes renovation tax credit, a seniors-focused initiative from our government that is one in a series of many credits and seniors-focused initiatives that we have brought to the Legislature over the last number of years.

I want to begin this afternoon, Speaker, if I can, though, by focusing a little bit—and I've been here for a fair bit of the last two days, listening to much of the debate on this senior healthy homes renovation tax credit.

The opposition members, almost en masse, as they have spoken to this, have focused a bit of their criticism on what they would perceive and convey to their constituents as a lack of affordability or a lack of accessibility of this particular credit. When I listen to the speeches, it seems to me as if the opposition members are conveying to their constituents and people following the debate on television that you almost need to spend the entire \$10,000—therefore it's not going to be accessible—before you can be eligible to receive the rebate of some 15%.

I want to be clear, speaking to my constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan and to people following this across the entire province, that you do not need to spend

\$10,000; you need to spend only up to \$10,000, which is the maximum. On any amount of money up to \$10,000, you are eligible for a 15% rebate on that amount of money, so let's be clear to our constituents.

I hope the members in the opposition benches, when they get calls to their constituency associations, will be conveying to their constituents that, no, you don't have to spend all of the \$10,000. You can spend \$1,000 or \$3,000 and get a 15% rebate on that amount.

Speaker, let's also be clear that most seniors, even seniors of modest income, do spend money on their homes. It's not as easy for some as it is for others, but they do spend money, and this credit can help them.

The reason I want to spend a couple of minutes on this is this: One or two weeks ago, we debated in here a private member's bill put forward by a member of the third party that was going to remove part of the HST off gas bills or heating bills in the province of Ontario. By his own admission, when he spoke on the bill, it was going to save his constituents, in a northern Ontario riding, about \$100 annually. He said that. The second party, the official opposition, supported it as well.

It was going to save them \$100 annually, okay? That averages out to about 27 cents a day. They were very supportive of that, and yet they're dismissive here of an issue that if you spend \$1,000—and most seniors spend money on their homes for grab bars, for lifts, for a variety of things; they'll spend some money. If you spend \$1,000, you're going to get \$150 back, which is more than in the private member's bill that was introduced, that both of the opposition parties want to hang their hats on and talk about as one of the most incredible things to come to the Legislature in the last while.

By way of comparison, it's important—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the two members to cease and desist from their outbursts. Thank you.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you, Speaker.

By way of comparison, it is very important for me to point out that this is going to save more money than that private member's bill would have. It was really remarkable to see how much political capital they had invested in that one point.

To be clear: You don't have to spend \$10,000; you can spend \$1,000, and it will get you 150 bucks back. Most seniors, no matter what their income levels, do spend money on their own homes, and there is a whole long list of things here that are eligible. Not all expenses are, but many of them are.

I want to go through—jeez, I'm almost down to five minutes already. I want to get on the record some of the things that we've already done, lest the opposition members leave my constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan with the impression that this is the only thing we've done for seniors over the course of the last number of years:

—enhancements to the energy and property tax credit, up to \$1,025 annually—I believe voted against by the opposition;



—personal income tax reduction, on average saving \$200 for everyone in the province of Ontario, including our seniors—I believe voted against by the opposition;

—the Ontario sales tax credit, up to \$260 per family member, including seniors, for every family member, in addition to the existing GST credit;

1620

—seniors in the north: a special piece, eligible up to \$130 for a single, up to \$200 for a family, in northern Ontario only;

—the Ontario senior homeowners' property tax grant: We increased that from \$250 to \$500 in our 2010 budget—voted against by the opposition—seniors only; and

—increasing access to locked-in accounts; we did that.

Speaker, about a year ago, I ran into an old friend of mine. Here's one we don't ever talk about often enough in the Legislature: seniors-focused income-splitting. The feds got great notoriety and notice for their work on income-splitting. This old friend of mine came up to me and said, "Billy, I've got to thank you for your income-splitting tax initiative." That one income-splitting measure alone, as a senior couple, he told me, was paying for his winter vacation every year. I don't know how many of us as Liberals in this Legislative Assembly talk about that, but we need to do a better job of reminding people about that. That's about the seventh or eighth one.

The Ontario clean energy benefit—and I'm very proud of this one, Speaker. As the chair of the northern caucus, we worked very hard to move this one forward, as did all other members of caucus. This benefit—10% off your electricity bills, available to everybody in the province of Ontario—is valued annually at \$1.2 billion or \$1.3 billion.

The last example of what we've done for seniors that I'll mention—and I don't have the total dollar values in front of me, Speaker; I wish I had. We've been uploading now, off the residential property tax base in the province of Ontario, those services that were formerly downloaded by the Conservative government from 1995 to 2003. We have been bringing those off of people's tax bases. This is what this is about. This is one more affordability measure to help people stay in their own homes. We have been uploading those services back off their property tax base.

I know that there was an AMO conference in August, a month or two before the election. I know that after the leader of the official opposition made his speech there were a lot of municipal leaders in the province of Ontario very concerned because it didn't sound to them like the leader of the official opposition, who wanted to be Premier, was committed to continuing the upload. I forget who it was from the official opposition who ended up touring around the province trying to do some damage control after the AMO conference. The point is: We're here; we're continuing that upload. It's actually in the billions of dollars that we're taking back off the residential property tax base.

My colleagues and I have listed here for you a variety of measures, most of which, I will say, have been voted

against by the opposition parties at one time or another, and all of which impact the affordability of seniors in their own homes. Those are the facts.

Speaker, what's the focus of the measure? We know that health care is chewing up, on an annual basis, more and more of our provincial budget. We're close to 50% of the total spending that the province of Ontario does being used up in health care. We know that the challenges related to health care are growing; they're not getting smaller: the baby boomers just turning 65, we've got an aging population, dementias, diabetes, First Nations issues, and on and on it goes. So if we can bring in measures that are going to help our seniors to stay in their homes longer, that is to the benefit of all of us.

I could go through a long list of health care initiatives. We're talking financially about how we're able to allow our seniors to stay in their own homes, and I've given you a list of about 10 things that have made it more affordable for them. But we could talk about the fact that, over the course of our mandate—and I heard the speaker before me from the third party talk about being a registered nurse—we've hired somewhere in the order of 11,000 nurses over the course of our mandate. We've hired over 3,200 doctors.

Speaker, who is it that uses our health care system the most? Seniors. All of these initiatives were focused primarily on them—a wait time strategy that, for the first time in the history of this province, allowed people to measure how long they had to wait for surgeries. The first five initiatives on the wait time strategy: hips and knees, MRIs, cataracts, cancer, and cardiac, most of which, again, focused on seniors.

Speaker, there is a long list of initiatives that we've taken. Please, I tell my people in Thunder Bay–Atikokan and right across the province, when you're listening to the debate on this issue, this is far from the only initiative that we have brought forward to help seniors in the province of Ontario—a long list of things that we're very proud of. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I certainly had some concerns regarding this bill, and I'll be frank: Ultimately, my decision to not support the bill is founded upon three main concerns.

Firstly, as my colleagues have mentioned, this bill will only benefit those seniors who can afford to spend \$10,000 on home improvements. Talking with constituents in my riding, they tell me that this is not their reality. We are not tasked with ensuring that wealthy seniors can cope; we are tasked with ensuring that all seniors can cope with rising costs.

Secondly, I am concerned with the shell game that is inherent within the bill. It is dishonest for this government to try to portray the tax benefit as a 15% return. That is simply not the case. The 13% HST paid on the qualifying \$10,000 in goods and services would be an additional \$1,300. Therefore, the 15% supposed return only nets 2%. Spending \$10,000 and getting 2% back



doesn't sound like such a plum offer when you have all the facts.

I would suggest that this government be honest for once. Rather than constantly trying to posture in appearance, be honest. Ontario families understand this government's shell game of taxing more and then pretending they are doing Ontario families a favour by returning a small portion of their own money.

Thirdly, I am concerned with how this government intends to fund this program. We heard this government commit, in the speech from the throne, that all new spending would come from realized savings elsewhere. So where are the realized savings? It seems to me that the only time this government gives without hidden strings attached is if the money is going to union friends or to reckless green energy projects. So unless these seniors are going to organize within their own homes or install turbines, they know they aren't going to be getting what they sign up for.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to comment on some of the comments from the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

It's typical of the Liberal initiatives we've seen over the last eight years. The talk is large but, at the end of the day, the actual effect is small. Sure, you don't have to get the whole \$1,500; you can get 15% off a \$45 item, off a \$50 item. When I talked to Gilda in Iroquois Falls—she's about 80. I knocked on her door. She owns her own house. She never asked for a grab bar. She never asked for a walk-in shower. She asked, "Mr. Vanthof, I'm having a hard time paying my heat bills. HST off would be nice. Help with new windows would be great so I could save some heat." It's those things that are going to keep people in their houses.

It's not the bill itself; it's the minuscule amount of people it's going to help. There's a lot of press being given about it and, "Oh, we're going to help so many people. We're going to create so many jobs." But in the end, there are things we could do for seniors that would benefit the seniors more than what this bill is going to do.

In itself, the proposal isn't necessarily bad. It's that it's so narrow; that's the problem. It's meant to create a lot of good press but not so much results for the majority of seniors who really need help in this province. I hope that the government will consider broadening this bill to truly impact more seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Oakville.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate and to pass some comments on my friend the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

I think any government attempts to try to support as many members in society as it possibly can in a number of ways. We support our young people in a number of ways. This particular initiative, I think, looks at the other end of the age spectrum in a very practical way. It looks at what happens in the aging process and what happens to

people who would prefer to stay at home as opposed to moving into an institutional setting; or what happens to a family as it starts to get back together when, perhaps, the son or the daughter asks the parent to move back into the home. I think it's just very straightforward that, often, that entails some changes to the physical layout of the house itself. Where I think a government can play a role in encouraging more people to stay in their own homes, or encouraging sons and daughters to perhaps accommodate a parent who wants to move back into their own home, is to give them some assistance to allow for those physical changes to be made.

1630

At the same time, I think any party that formed a government would be looking for some sort of a win-win situation. In this case, we're able to help the seniors; we're perhaps able to help people who aren't seniors yet but would be responsible for the costs. Also, there's work that needs to be done here. There are contractors that need to be hired. There are supplies that need to be bought. There are a number of things that are entailed in the economic exchange that takes place when somebody just makes that simple decision that they're going to renovate their home or retrofit their home so that it would accommodate an older person more readily.

All the member spoke about, I think very simply, was that this government, at this point in time, is prepared to offer a program that assists families to do that. The opposition parties may think we could do more. Perhaps that's true, but it would seem to me that all parties should be supporting this particular initiative, and then we move on.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you, Speaker—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'm slow at the switch. We'll go—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I just got up. They were stalling over there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'm sorry, member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I just wanted to take the opportunity. Sorry about that.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for my tardiness in getting up.

I just wanted to say that this bill obviously was announced during the election—that it was coming and so forth—so some of my constituents were already looking forward to it. They inquired to my office as to what was in the bill, and I would just like to share with the members here what the email that I got back today was.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** You might want to put your BlackBerry away.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Well, I have to read it from there, Mr. Speaker.

"Whatever you sent me didn't come through. Is it that you have to spend \$10,000 to get a \$1,500 tax break? Where does a senior get \$10,000, and what would a



\$1,500 tax break do for a low-income senior? Something doesn't sound right from where I stand.

"I have never seen anything that helps seniors. Everybody wants to help people with children but put seniors out to pasture. Why does a person work all their life to lose everything in the end?"

"Then you ask, why should people vote? I have to come to the conclusion that voting will be the one thing I will never do again. I have voted since the first time I could and look where it's got me. I think it's time all governments were disbanded, and put in people who are for the people and not big corporations.

"Why should governments get big pensions and the taxpayers pay for it? We should all be on the same page when it comes to pensions. We have invested our whole lives to it, and we all deserve to be treated fairly."

This was the comment I got back when we sent the constituent the information in this bill, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a shame that they would put something forward like that to help the seniors, and that's what the seniors think about it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I just want to quickly take an opportunity to introduce Joe Mancinelli from LIUNA, who is here with his colleagues, sitting in the members' east gallery.

I want to thank the members from Chatham—Kent—Essex, Timiskaming—Cochrane, Oakville and Oxford for their comments.

To the member from Chatham—Kent—Essex: You spoke to the affordability and accessibility issue. I spent 10 minutes. I talked for at least four or five about that. I don't feel the need to go over that territory again.

To the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane, who referenced one of his constituents named Gilda: Well, I hope you told Gilda about the 10% Ontario Clean Energy Benefit that we brought in. I hope you told her that for the longest time, we in fact did have an energy-related program in the province of Ontario. Apparently, she can afford new windows, but she can't afford to buy some grab bars. In fact, that program, Gilda might be interested to know, still exists at the federal level. So you could maybe convey that to her, and that might be a help.

One of the things that I didn't mention in my remarks in terms of the long list of things we've done over the last number of years to bring relief to seniors was the fight we took on with the big drug companies to get a better deal for generic drug companies—and so much detail there that I must say was extremely unsavoury. I can tell you some of the things that my constituency office experienced through that campaign. There will be a day when the detail on that will become a little clearer, and we'll all use it, I guess, as we will.

There was a question this morning from the third party about a drug that was not accessible to one of the third party's constituents. Speaker, that fight that we took on, and it wasn't an easy fight, in fact has saved the government of Ontario about \$500 million, all of which has

been ploughed back into health care to put more drugs back on the formulary to help those very people that were referenced this morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm pleased to stand today to give my inaugural speech.

To begin with, it is a honour and a privilege to be a part of the 40th Parliament here at Queen's Park. I'm humbled by the overwhelming support shown to me by the constituents in my Chatham—Kent—Essex riding, a once-Liberal stronghold. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, when one holds a government position, that person usually walks to a different drummer. It is my intention to bring my inaugural address differently.

To my predecessor, Pat Hoy, MPP, I wish you much health and happiness in your retirement. Thank you for serving.

To my wife, Dianne, of 35 years—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Sorry to interrupt the member, but there appears to be a bit of a mix-up here. The party had asked for 20 minutes' consent and it was given, and the member isn't doing it. So we'll allow you to go with 10 minutes. They missed their 20-minute request.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** So it's 10 minutes—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** That's not what I was told.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, we'd better straighten this out. Clerk, please. We'll straighten it out right now.

We seem to have straightened out the difficulty, and I'm sorry for interrupting the member from Chatham—Kent—Essex. You may continue where you left off and whatever time you lost, please put it back on the clock—or add it to it. Add it. Thank you. Go ahead.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you.

To my wife, Dianne, of 35 years and my three terrific children Jeff, Kristin and Brooke, thank you for your love and support throughout this incredible journey. I love you very much.

1640

I would be remiss if I didn't give a very heartfelt thanks to the many people who helped me in my journey to become the MPP for Chatham—Kent—Essex. Thank yous are extended to Ed O'Brien, Brandy Robertson-Young, Jeff Parker, Joanne VanAlphen, Uly and Sherril Will, Brad Easter, Chris Timmermans, Roxanne Hedberg, George Paisiovich, Larry Landry, Jim Gray, Ric Aarssen and Carolyn Walker. So, to my core campaign team, the dozens of volunteers and the thousands of PC supporters who voted for me, I say thank you.

I was born in a wonderful, loving, nurturing and respectful family where my parents, Jeanne and Fred Nicholls, raised me as an only child. I would have had an

older brother, but the Lord had other plans for him. Today I'm hopeful, as they look down from heaven, that they're proud of their son and little brother.

Today is a special day for me as well, as it is a celebration of my mother's birthday—101 years old. But sadly, she left us at a very young age. Happy birthday, Mom.

For you history buffs, I believe politics might even be hereditary, as my great-grandfather, Frederick George Rumball, was the mayor of London during Queen Victoria's reign in 1901. Hence, I was named after him: Frederick Rumball Nicholls. Maybe great-granddaddy was giving me a reputation to live up to.

Chatham-Kent-Essex is my riding, and it's the most southwesterly held PC riding in the province. Not only does it include Chatham proper, but it also encompasses the towns of Leamington, Wheatley, Tilbury, Merlin, Blenheim, Ridgetown, Highgate and many other smaller communities in between—a very rural riding.

Agriculture is obviously a major focal point in my riding. It supports a variety of agricultural crops for fresh markets and processing. Leamington is home to the largest concentration of greenhouses in North America. Cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers and flowers make up the majority of the greenhouse crops, with well over 1,600 acres under cover. This, by the way, represents over 80% of the total greenhouse operations in Ontario.

Chatham-Kent, on the other hand, has been hit very hard by the automotive industry. Where have they all gone? I think about Eaton Yale, Motor Wheel, Canadian Fram, even Libby's, Campbell Soup, Hunt-Wesson and, most recently, Navistar. Yes, job creation and making it easier for businesses to invest and stay is priority one for me.

As a proud member of the Legislative Assembly, I will continue to work in the best interests of Ontario families, holding true to the values and principles that govern democracy—job creation, rein in government spending and provide relief for Ontario families.

By the way, did you know that Chatham is also the home of Canada's only Major League Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, Ferguson Jenkins? Other notables include Doug Melvin, general manager of the Milwaukee Brewers; Shae-Lynn Bourne, gold medal winner of the 2003 world ice skating championships; and in the music world, Ian and Sylvia Tyson and Michelle Wright. Just think: Jenkins, Melvin, Bourne, the Tysons, Wright and now Nicholls.

Faith, integrity, honesty, loyalty, passion and a sense of humour are key ingredients to who I am. I believe in a can-do versus a can't-do attitude. I've been told that I'm so optimistic that I would go after Moby Dick in a rowboat and bring along the tartar sauce.

I've always had a heart for serving people and have done so over the past 25 years as an entrepreneur, where my public-speaking skills and training were best utilized.

And speaking of heart, I have created an acronym: HEART. The H stands for honesty. I was raised with the adage that honesty is the best policy. I practise that every

day in life. Whether in our personal lives or in our professional lives, I believe it's always best to be straight up with people. It's always easier to remember the truth. It also means being honest with oneself as well. Don't look at life through rose-coloured glasses.

The E in HEART stands for effort. There's a management saying that if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you always got. Mind you, there are those who think that things will be different if you continue to do what you've always done. That's not progress; that's insanity.

Collectively, we all need to remember who sent us here to Queen's Park, and from the voters' perspective, we always need to be putting forth our best effort on behalf of our constituents.

The A in HEART stands for attitude. It's been said that your attitude will determine your altitude of success. I work hard at being a positive person, and when I feel my attitude is slipping, I need to give myself an attitude adjustment: PMA, positive mental attitude. And you know what? If we all practise positive mental attitude, we'll get more enjoyment in life and it's been proven that it will add years to our life.

The R in HEART stands for responsibility. I cannot use the word "responsible" without adding yet another word: "accountable." In the end I know to whom I'm accountable and will be held accountable, but we are also accountable and must act in a responsible manner to those who elected us into office. To thine own self be true.

And the T in HEART stands for teamwork. I have often told people that we must learn to get along and play well in the sandbox of life. If we can share common goals and work towards those means, life will be much less complicated. I also believe that a good idea doesn't care who owns it, so let's be team players. Championship teams recognize that in order to be successful, the team's success is dependent upon the collective skill sets of everyone moving in the same direction.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I have taken the liberty of re-working a famous quote taken from the inaugural speech of JFK, back in 1961. I say: Ask not what this government can do for you, but ask what can we, as the three provincial parties working collectively for the betterment of hard-working Ontario families, do together.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier in my inaugural speech that it would be different. It's my wish that the members not only found it different and informative but will take the latter portion of my address to heart.

I wish to thank all who have provided guidance, support and wisdom in my journey to become the MPP for Chatham-Kent-Essex, now and for years to come. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex on his election. We both came at the same time and we share a few other things: We both have blue on our signs,



although he had a bit more, but we both had blue on our signs; we share that. We both have politicians in our background, and both our ridings have faced hard times.

I particularly like what he said about working together and staying optimistic, because that's something that all of the new members who came in—I think we all believe that and I think we all are going to try and bring that to this new Parliament. It's a part of the parliamentary process to have division, but out of division should come better ideas, and I think that you've expressed that very well, that we have to work together to bring those better ideas, like—and I have to have one political hit in here—we're working together to take the HST off home heating.

Your optimism and the way you voice it really shines through, and I hope I can be as optimistic as you are right now in the future. I hope that you remain that optimistic as you represent your riding and as I represent mine. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm pleased to hear the throne speech debate that we just heard. It was not necessarily on the bill, but we're very flexible in afternoon sittings here, so I certainly commend that. It was a highly interesting speech. I would say that Dale Carnegie would not have been not applauding; Dale Carnegie would have been mighty happy. Ted Sorensen's son might not be as happy with the change of the quote, but there we are.

1650

I know, since there's a matter of co-operation here, that the member is going to be supporting the bill which brings in the southwestern Ontario development fund. Now, I've heard a couple of people in the Conservative caucus who have said they're opposed to it, so I was going to place a call to Senator Bob Runciman, who landed in what we would call political heaven, that being the red chamber in Ottawa, where one never has to be re-elected but simply adhere to the pledge given to the Prime Minister when one gets appointed to that august body.

I know Senator Runciman would have been in favour of this; his successor, Mr. Clark, the member for that riding, would be in favour. So I'm looking for support because I've heard how much co-operation we're going to have as a result.

I agree with the member when he says that this House would work well together if people didn't keep fighting—I'm kind of paraphrasing—the last election campaign but instead decided to look at all legislation in a very objective way.

I watch with great amusement question period, petitions and members' statements, because it reminds me all the time of the Canadian Tire commercial. The Conservatives want us to spend like Santa and save like Scrooge, because on the one hand they are demanding that we save money constantly; on the other hand, they get up and they want to spend more. So spend like Santa, save like Scrooge: Canadian Tire Conservative Party.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to comment on the address by my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex, but first I'm just going to make a quick comment on the Minister of the Environment. We keep hearing that spend thing, the save thing. Look, spending in this province is at an all-time high. It's about time the people on the other side of the aisle understood that it's about managing your money, not how much you have. And that applies to everybody and should apply to this government.

But I want to go back to my colleague. I'm so proud of not only Rick Nicholls but the other 14 people who have never sat in this chamber before, of course, along with Laurie Scott, who was elected after a brief absence from this chamber.

This is the greatest crop of new members we've seen in a long time in this House. I love the attitude that I hear from my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex, a positive attitude regardless of what is going on. I hope that—I know he will, because this is a positive man. I know that politics can sometimes breed a bit of cynicism, particularly when you're dealing with a government such as this, that talks about cooperation and working together, but then everything that they do is counter to that. They turn their noses at the offers from the opposition for good suggestions about making this province operate more efficiently and better and bringing relief to the beleaguered taxpayer, such as my friends from the NDP—Mr. Mantha's bill about taking the provincial portion of the HST off home heating. Those things matter. But they just dismissed it.

But I say to my friend from Chatham-Kent-Essex, God bless you for coming here. His mother would be 101 today. My parents today would be married 65 years; they're both long gone. But we share an important day. Glad to have you here as a friend and colleague. All the best to you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Congratulations to the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex and welcome to this chamber. In fact, while I'm at it, welcome to all the new members and to the returning members, for that reason, as well.

We've heard a number of maiden speeches this afternoon and, to correct the member from St. Catharines, they really don't have to be that specific. There's been a long-standing tradition in this House that maiden speeches are just that, a chance to introduce yourself to the House and a chance to thank the folk in your riding and to speak to them, because they're the ones that sent you here.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank some very hard-working individuals that never get thanked much, and that's our clerks. My goodness, and particularly in a minority government, I think we owe them a debt of gratitude. They're working harder than they've ever



worked since we've been here. So thank you to our clerks.

And yes, I want to thank the translators and Hansard. These are folk who work behind the scenes. They don't get the camera turned on them too often, but they do incredible work. And for that matter, the illustrious member who is sitting in the throne, we want to thank him. He's acting judiciously.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** What about the Sergeant?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Yes, and the Sergeant too, my benchmate points out—the Sergeant too. Let's hear it for our Sergeant. He keeps us all safe.

As for the bill itself, this home renovation—a couple of real problems. I won't probably get a chance to speak to this. Yes, we're tending to support this in the New Democrats because an inch is better than nothing. Our seniors deserve a whole lot more than an inch, of course, and this doesn't afford them much more than that. For one thing, the HST plus MPAC's reassessment of their house will claw back any benefit that they've got from this bill. But it sounds good; it is an inch, so be it. We support it. It's sad, though, that this is as good as it gets.

Anyway, thank you all. Congratulations on getting back here, and to all a good night.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex has a two-minute response.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the member from Timiskaming–Timmins, the Minister of the Environment and also the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for their comments. I truly do appreciate it.

You know, I'm a firm believer in that attitude will in fact determine altitude of success. And you know what? It's not what happens to us in life that really matters; it's what we do with what happens to us in life. That, my friend, is what truly matters. That's what really matters at the end. I mean, we can go back and forth in this House, which is full of history, and we may differ politically on some of our points, but hopefully, at the end, I hope and trust and pray that we'll be able to collectively work together for the betterment of all who have in fact put us in our chairs this particular day.

It was obvious to me that my riding recognized the true values and principles that I stand for, and hence, also realized what a strong PC leadership can bring to our particular riding. So again, to my riding: I'm eternally grateful for that.

I would also like to thank the member from—I'm not sure where—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Parkdale–High Park.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Parkdale–High Park; forgive me. Thank you for your comments as well. Forgive me; I'm a rookie. But thank you.

Mr. Speaker, again, thank you for the opportunity to speak in this illustrious Legislature. It's an honour and a privilege. I am truly humbled by the opportunity to serve not only my own caucus and the other two parties but,

more importantly, the constituents of Chatham–Kent–Essex. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? Member, you've been recognized.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I didn't notice I was recognized yet.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to engage in further debate on the government proposal for the seniors' tax credit. Of course, when we're talking about the seniors' tax credit, there's no one here in this House who would suggest that we don't need to take care of our seniors. Seniors are vulnerable for many reasons: Economically they live off a fixed income; their employability, obviously, is reduced; they rely on their savings; and their health—as one ages, of course, health becomes more and more of an issue. That is a real issue; that's a real concern. That's something that no one in this House would disagree with. All of us are committed to caring for our seniors, recognizing their vulnerability.

So there's no question that we should support an initiative that proposes to take care of our seniors. But when we look at this bill, a number of questions are posed. What is the goal of this bill? The goal of this bill, in the wording of the language, is that we want to care for our seniors, we want to take steps to give them a break and make life easier for our seniors. The purported goal is to make life easier for seniors: "Let's keep them in their homes where they want to be and where it's most economically advantageous for them to be."

But if the goal truly is assisting our seniors, giving them a break and making life easier for our seniors, then why limit this tax credit to mobility? I understand that we are in difficult times and we have limited resources, so the tax credit being applied to \$10,000 as a cap—I can see some logic in perhaps capping. But why is the limitation on mobility items only?

If you look at seniors, their concerns, their troubles, are varied.

1700

There are many concerns they face. They face health concerns; they face transportation concerns. These concerns are not limited to home mobility. To keep seniors in their home, we also have to keep them healthy in their home. If they require electricity to operate life-saving equipment, then savings on electricity would keep them in their home. If to stay in their home they need to go and get groceries, travel to doctors, travel to other areas, then we need to assist them in accessing transportation—maybe a tax credit that applies to transit, that applies to their ability to get around their neighbourhood, their constituency, their area.

If our goal truly is to assist seniors, then this bill is far too narrow. The scope of this bill does not truly encompass all the concerns of seniors. So I urge my colleagues—I urge the members opposite—to consider expanding the catchment, expanding what this bill truly covers, so that we can give more comprehensive assistance to seniors, true assistance to seniors.



By analogy, if we look at the seniors' tax credit and all the requirements—you have to be 65 years of age; it applies to mobility items such as grab bars, ramps and lifts making the home more accessible—and compare that to the tax credit proposed for corporations, the tax credit proposed for corporations has no strings attached. We want to give corporations an additional tax credit without any requirements, any stipulations, any restrictions.

Why is it that we put so many restrictions on our seniors—limit their ability to access this tax credit by limiting the sphere of what they can rely on in terms of only mobility equipment in the home—but we place no restrictions on corporations? I ask my colleagues in this House to consider the lack of fairness. Why is it that corporations are given a blank cheque but our seniors aren't? I urge the government members opposite to consider imposing a limitation on corporations and taking away the limitation or restriction on our seniors.

More carefully and more clearly, I propose that the corporate tax break be based on whether or not a corporation employs someone in Ontario, whether or not they invest in infrastructure in Ontario, whether they invest in machinery or factories or equipment to ensure that there are jobs here where we live in Ontario, and with our seniors, we loosen those restrictions. Expand the tax credit to allow for a tax credit on transportation, whether it's getting a transit pass, whether it's travelling in their riding by means of taxi or their own vehicle; expand it to include diet—nutrition. It's important for our seniors to eat healthy. Let's allow them a tax credit on purchasing healthy food. Let's allow a tax credit that expands to apply to other areas including medical equipment. If seniors need to purchase equipment of a medical nature that may not be mobility-related to keep them in their home, let's expand the tax credit to assist those as well.

Times are certainly difficult, and when we look at our budget, we have to look at it in terms that if we invest somewhere, there may be a requirement to cut somewhere else. Let's not cut when it comes to seniors; let's invest more in our seniors. Let's cut where we can ensure jobs. Let's cut where it comes to the true issue in Ontario, which is creating more jobs. Let's link our corporate tax breaks to creating more jobs here in Ontario, to creating more infrastructure for jobs, to ensuring that our workplace employees are trained, and give more incentives to grow the economy here in Ontario—and real incentive, not just the hope of an increased economy based on a tax credit that has no strings attached to it.

For this reason, when we look at the seniors' tax credit, I urge all the members in this House to really take a look at what we want to accomplish. If we truly want to help our seniors, then let's make this a bill that truly helps our seniors and that's not limited to mobility concerns.

The other issue that comes to mind, and it's been raised a number of times in this House, is: Who can truly access this tax credit? It's true that there's not a limitation, that one doesn't have to spend the entire \$10,000,

but one does have to spend some money. This tax credit only applies if a senior can spend money. Now, if a senior can only spend or afford \$100 for home improvements, the tax credit has a very minimal impact on their life. It's not a truly revolutionary effect; it's a very limited effect. If we want to help our seniors, we need more than just this type of incentive, where you spend money and you get a savings. We need something that's more comprehensive, something that truly assists those who are vulnerable in our society.

The other issue in terms of, again, looking at the scope of this bill: In Ontario, we know we are going through very difficult times. Economically, there are difficulties facing all Ontarians. If they face all Ontarians, seniors will be the most hard-hit. With the cost of living rising, with the cost of living increasing beyond that of the means of subsisting in society, it becomes more important—it becomes essential—that we look at reducing that cost of living. Seniors are, again, most hard-hit, being on fixed incomes and having limited employment. So if our goal is to assist seniors, let's look at making life more affordable for seniors and what we can do to do that.

That's why the proposal to remove the HST from home heating really hits home when it comes to assisting seniors. It's a guaranteed way of reducing some of that cost of living. I urge my colleagues in this House to look at more innovative ways that we can assist our seniors in reducing that cost of living. That's really the heart of the matter. That's really the core of the issue. We need to make life more affordable so that our seniors can exist in dignity, can retire and enjoy a lifelong commitment or service to community, and then, in retirement, enjoy what they rightfully deserve.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments? The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You look quite esteemed in that chair.

I want to really commend my friend from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, because I think he has become one of the more articulate and thoughtful voices in this House very quickly.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** He'll be using this in his pamphlet—watch out.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** He probably will be.

And I love cars, Mr. Speaker. I just had to give up my lease on my little Miata, so I'm kind of heartbroken. It was a good, modest, Liberal car.

But I do want to say something, because there is this sort of standard that everything we do, and that sometimes the opposition holds us to, which is a ridiculous standard—and I think I'm hearing from my friend that he is a more sophisticated critic than that. It's easy to say that everything we're doing is not enough, because, I mean, really, tell me the one thing that any government can do that solves all problems. There are no silver bullets or panaceas.

But I actually think, and one of the reasons I'm very excited about this—and I spend a lot of time with my



friend Harpreet out in Brampton. I represent a community with large Afghani, Somali and Tamil communities where young families, young people who are good income earners, pay and take care of their parents. In the Tamil community, one of my staff who's the youngest son will be expected to have his parents live with him and be taken care of by him and his wife.

If you can afford to buy a BMW or a Miata—and I don't apologize for either—you can afford \$10,000 to make your bathroom. In a lot of farm communities—because I grew up and spent a lot of my time in Alexandria, quite frankly, and a lot of farmhouses, because a lot of my cousins are farmers in Prince Edward county—that is not beyond their means. This is very meaningful.

My mother is just relocating to Toronto. We just rented an apartment. It's going to cost Rick and I probably about \$20,000 to retrofit that apartment. I don't need the \$15,000, but it's going to go to my mom because she can use that. My mother lives on about \$1,200 a year. My father was a small business person and did not have pensions—died at 63 of prostate cancer. But we live in families. I'm always surprised when I hear Conservatives saying, "Well, we have poor people." Like, there aren't four or five.

In my constituency, with two million people of Chinese and Indo cultural backgrounds, this is very common, and I think this is a meaningful tax credit.

1710

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further questions?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** In my community, there are many seniors who have had to go back into the workforce. So if you go into your local Walmart, you go to Tim Hortons or you go to McDonald's, you will see people over the age of 65 who have actually had to go back to work in my community.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The mayor of Mississauga is 90 years old.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Yes, 90 years old, that's right; and she can probably afford to do a \$10,000 retrofit.

But in my community there have been tens of thousands of jobs lost. We have companies like Atlas Steel, formerly Atlas Specialty Steels, and then I think it had another name after that—that went out of business maybe seven or eight years ago. The workers at that factory thought they had a pension, and two or three years into the plant closures found out that they lost 30% of their pensions. They lost 30% of their benefits. Their pensions were not fully funded, which is a whole other issue that we really need to be dealing with here in this province.

Those kinds of seniors in my community don't have \$10,000. They thought they were going to have a \$1,500-a-month pension or a \$2,000-a-month pension and they were going to get their CPP and their old-age to go along with that. Well, guess what? They don't have it now. Maybe they get \$1,000 a month.

There are a lot of seniors in my community that could never possibly take advantage of a tax credit because of

the fact that they've lost their jobs and their pensions were not fully funded.

As we've said, the bill is admirable, but we think that we need to go further for all seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that only 10 minutes have been able to be allocated for this portion of the speech, because I know that the member, who has already directed a question from the opposition to the government on auto insurance, was wondering, as I was—and you will remember the years, because you're a strong New Democrat; the years when my good friend Rosario, the member for Trinity-Spadina, was advocating public auto insurance. With all of the problems that are alleged in public auto insurance, I was surprised that the number one promise of the New Democratic Party was not implemented. I know they like blaming Bob Rae as though he was the only person there. The others must have all been at a conference in Honey Harbour or something, because, I can tell you, my New Democratic Party friends always said that was going to happen. I know the member didn't get a chance to express his disappointment, but he probably is.

He would also know how difficult it is between offering suggestions in opposition—and we welcome them—and being in government, because I do recall that the government of Saskatchewan—you'll recall Premier Romanow—had to close 52 rural hospitals. That's not something that they did lightly. They didn't do it to be mean, they didn't do it because they wanted to, but they were confronted with the realities of public office.

Also, I wanted to recommend to him a book by Janice MacKinnon, the former finance minister of the province of Saskatchewan, called *Minding the Public Purse*, where she talks about the great dilemmas that governments happen to face. They didn't have to implement the social contract, ripping up all the contracts of the public service in their province, but they did have to rein in many of those expenditures.

So I wish the member would have had more time so he could have elaborated on those particular issues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further questions?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I want to congratulate the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton. I had the opportunity to meet him last week, and I have been observing him as he has spoken in this House and began to make a contribution in representing his constituents. I want to congratulate him: I've personally been very impressed with the comments and statements he has made. Certainly his presentation today shows that he's carefully reflecting on the content of the bill and expressing his opinions as to how it can be improved. He has recognized, obviously, that there are people in this province who aren't going to have access to funding that is being provided.

This bill, despite the fact that it will obviously help some seniors in the province of Ontario, is certainly not



going to be of assistance to a great number. I know that when I look at my riding and I look at people I know, there has been a tremendous amount of hardship they have suffered in recent years. I would tell you that one area where they have certainly experienced the greatest hardship is seeing their hydro bill go up on an ongoing basis. Now we learn—and it's been confirmed by the Auditor General—that hydro rates are going to increase by some 8% a year for people throughout the province of Ontario.

This is an area where this government could have moved forward and addressed the hardships that are being felt, not just by seniors but by other people in the province of Ontario. In that way, they could have assisted all the individuals in this province who are really finding it more difficult to make ends meet on a daily basis.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton has a two-minute response.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, my colleague the member from Welland, the Minister of the Environment and the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for your responses. Whom do I begin with?

I can't resist talking a little bit about auto insurance, since it has been brought up in the replies. I wish the Minister of Finance was here for this response so I could direct some comments to him—I speak no ill about his presence or not. I'll direct it to the Minister of the Environment for raising the issue. Regardless of the car anyone drives in Ontario, I think the fact that Ontario has the highest auto insurance for all people of Ontario, despite the fact that we have the lowest accident rate, the lowest death rate, is shameful and—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Scandalous.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Scandalous—yes, that's a good word—problematic, outrageous. It's ridiculous, in fact. My colleague the member opposite will recall that in 2003 the Premier indicated a commitment to reducing insurance, that being one of his platform pieces to get elected. In fact, instead of reducing premiums, premiums have gone up year after year at an exorbitant rate.

Though there are difficulties, of course, when you are the government, there are also responsibilities, and the responsibility is taking care of the people of Ontario. If that requires some sacrifice and some hard work, then you have to live up to that. That's your obligation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 2 this afternoon. I've listened intently to other speakers from all sides of the House as they describe a variety of opinions as to what they think Bill 2 is all about: why it's good, why it's bad, how it could be improved.

As I said yesterday, I'm getting a much different impression from listening to the newer members of the House, and certainly it's kind of refreshing to hear people bring forward opinions about a bill where they say, "Well, this bill seems to be okay, but it could be strength-

ened this way or strengthened that way." That, I think, sets the tone and sets the mood, perhaps, for the rest of the term of this government, where the people who have elected us from the three parties that have representatives here have sent us here to work together. When I hear speakers get up and say, "You know what? The bill is okay, but I think it could be better," that's actually the sort of thing I as an individual member want to hear.

1720

I'd like members to feel they can bring forward their constructive suggestions, and if we ever get the committees going, certainly those members will be able to experience the exchange that goes on at the committee level, where it's much more informal, where people are able to express themselves just like you were sitting across the table from somebody. That exchange gets much more inviting, and I think a lot more work gets done at the committee level than gets done in this House, unfortunately. I'll leave that to the new members to make their own minds up about that, but certainly that has been my impression.

I listened intently to the previous speaker, and that was the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. If I had to summarize his remarks, he wants to do something for the seniors in this province, and I think all parties do. I wouldn't cast aspersions on any one of the parties to think that they would want to do otherwise. I think he was saying that while this is good, there are other ways and there are other things that we should be exploring, and I would tend to agree with that opinion. I don't think anybody in this House would suggest that this will be the last thing that any government of Ontario does for seniors in this province. There will be things that we will have to do in the future; there will be things we will want to do in the future.

I think what we're being asked to do today is to comment on the bill that's before the House at this point in time and to bring forward suggestions that may make it a better bill or to bring forward suggestions that maybe could improve this bill as it stands before us today.

This bill is part of a menu of other things that seniors can avail themselves of in the province of Ontario. Some of those have been brought in in the past by previous governments, and I think they were well intentioned and I think they've served the seniors in this province well.

This one in particular, though, is very, very practical, and it's part of an overall strategy where we realize that seniors, given their druthers, would much rather stay in their own homes, if they possibly could, as they aged. I don't think that's rocket science. I think that's something that all of us from all parties would have heard at front doors around Ontario when we campaigned in the election. Anybody we've known in our own families that has had the misfortune to have to go into hospital generally can't wait until they can get out and they can get back in their own bed or they can get back to their own home again. I don't think there's anything we could possibly argue about as to where seniors would prefer to be.



What we have to do as a government is to find ways to allow that to happen. Often, it's not the health of the senior that precludes a return home; often, it's the physical condition of the home itself. It could be things like steps; it could be things like handrails that allow you to get into the bathtub—very practical things that, until you don't have them there, you don't miss. Until you've got a broken leg, you don't realize how many steps you've got in your house. Until you've got to get out of the car and up the steps into your house in the first place, if you've got something that prevents that mobility, all of a sudden you realize some of the blocks and some of the impediments that other people have had to deal with for a number of years.

What this tax credit is doing is saying to seniors, or the families of seniors, at that point in time when you're making that decision to allow somebody—rather than be forced to go into an institutional setting or forced to, in some cases, even stay in a medical setting, to facilitate the return of that individual to their house. We realize that times economically are tough out there. We can look around the world and see examples in Europe, we can see examples in our neighbour's jurisdiction to the south, where times are tough and people could use some assistance. I think what we're saying, as a government collectively, is: If you decide to make this choice, if this is something that is going to assist you to stay in your house, we as a government are prepared to assist in that regard.

As I said, this is part of a menu of a number of initiatives that are available to seniors in the province of Ontario. I don't think that this government can take credit for them all but it can take credit for certainly a good number of the more recent ones, and that is as the nature of us being in government for the past eight years. Some of those have been supported by the opposition parties; some haven't. But we've certainly seen enhancements to things like the energy and the property tax credit for those people who are seniors; we've seen personal income tax cuts throughout the province of Ontario. Some 90,000 Ontarians simply don't pay income tax anymore as a result of provincial tax reform. We've got a sales tax credit where every senior in the province of Ontario is eligible for a payment of, I think it's up to \$250, or somewhere between \$250 and \$300 a year, in addition to the existing GST tax credit that they already can avail themselves of.

The Ontario seniors homeowner's property tax credit is available as well. We're providing, I think, over \$1 billion over the next five years, and that's going to help over 600,000 seniors, and they're people who have the low to moderate to middle incomes and who own their own homes and want to continue to own their own homes and want to stay in those homes.

This tax credit augments existing assistance programs that are benefiting seniors and allowing them to stay in their own homes. This provides the hardware. This provides the handrails, this provides the doorknobs, this provides things that, as I said, until you reach that point

where you need them, you perhaps wouldn't think of them—things like even lowering kitchen cupboards, lowering kitchen counters so you can reach them. Until perhaps you're confined to a wheelchair, you don't realize that you don't have the same reach that you used to. If you've got problems with your grip, with your hands, for example, door locks that are easier to operate—they're expensive. They're more expensive than an ordinary door lock. What we're saying is that by availing yourself of the tax credit that's available in this plan, you'll be able to retrofit your home. Pull-out shelves from under counters—you'll find that you can't reach under the counter, that you have to pull out whatever is in the cupboard towards you.

It's all these things. I think we've all been injured at some point in the past; we've all been on crutches or we've had to wear a cast or we've had an eye patch. Something has happened to probably all of us in this House, where we've found ourselves in a situation where we didn't have the use of our facilities the way we had in the past, and we found that life simply wasn't the same, that things have to change and that ordinary, everyday things are harder to do.

Things like a slip in the bathroom, for example—one of the things that we hear as people age, one of the things we don't want to hear, is that a senior has fallen, because quite often that leads to other things and quite often it leads to much more serious things. If we're able to equip our homes in such a way that seniors don't have those falls or accidents in the first place, it simply allows for a much better health outcome.

We're also starting to see advances now in technology where you don't have to reach up for the light switch, where simply because you walk into the room, you get a motion-activated light switch that turns on the lighting for you.

These are all things that I think make the lifestyle that our seniors would like to enjoy much more accessible and available, but they have extra costs attached to them. Anything like that generally will cost more than an ordinary light switch or will cost more than ordinary things we would put in our homes.

This is a recognition that there are extra expenses but also an undertaking from the government that we understand and that we're prepared to help in that regard. So for up to a maximum of \$10,000 in a year, eligible expenses, you would be eligible for a \$1,500 tax receipt each year. That, to me, seems to be something that makes sense. It's claimed on your personal income tax form, in any event; it's not something that you have to go above and beyond to get.

While other members may think there is more that we can do—I tend to agree with them in that regard—on this date, I think this bill is worthy of support and would ask members to support it. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Prince Edward-Hastings.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to respond to the comments from the member from Oakville.



Quite honestly—and I think the member put it rightly—this bill doesn't go very far, it doesn't do very much, and quite honestly, it's probably not worth the weeks of debate that we've had here in this House on this bill. It just doesn't go very far at all.

You know, as I was travelling around in Prince Edward-Hastings and talking to the various people during the election campaign, the seniors in my community don't have \$10,000. The member talked a lot about handrails and he talked a lot about doorknobs, but you're going to have to buy a lot of handrails and a lot of doorknobs to equal \$10,000—unless they're getting the very expensive gold-plated ones. I'm not sure.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Diamond studded perhaps. I'm not sure.

When I was speaking to members of Community Care for Seniors in Prince Edward county last week in my office in Belleville, we were talking about the fact that what the government really needs to do is invest more in those types of supports: those people that can go into people's homes and allow them to stay in their homes. I think that's where the government should be focused. It should be focused on saving money in health care by keeping people in their homes, by allowing them to stay in their homes and bring in the supports that they need in their homes.

1730

This doesn't do that. This is making someone spend \$10,000, and the seniors in Prince Edward-Hastings don't have \$10,000. They just don't have it. I mean, the member over there just talked about the fact that they're not even paying taxes. How do they expect to pay \$10,000 to put some handrails and a doorknob in their home? They just can't do it.

They need a break, and the break that we're offering them and the NDP are offering them is to give them the HST back. That money will go directly into making home improvements that they can actually afford. They can spend that money on getting the handrails and the doorknobs and the ramps that they need for their homes. That's just a better way to do it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to take a moment on the comments from the member from Prince Edward-Hastings and from the member for Oakville.

I would agree with the member from Prince Edward-Hastings that this bill doesn't go nearly, nearly far enough.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** That's dangerous. You're agreeing with the Tories.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yeah, well, we share a little bit of a colour on a sign.

But the one thing—I was encouraged by the member from Oakville when he said that this is the kind of thing that we should discuss in committee. As a new member, I am eagerly awaiting these fabled committees, because I am told that's where things really get done.

This bill doesn't go nearly far enough, because the goal is to keep seniors in their homes. So maybe in the committees we could—and I heard from the member from the government side that he's looking forward also to working in committees to look at this bill clause by clause. Perhaps there are things we can do in this bill without it costing a lot more money, that make it a lot more accessible to a lot more seniors, because at the end of the day, that will save health care dollars. We're all trying to save health care dollars, and we're all trying to keep seniors in their homes.

So perhaps we can work with this bill within these committees—I've heard of them; I haven't quite figured out how they work. I've kind of figured out how the House works, but the committees, I don't know—never seen one.

So when we get this set up, maybe we can actually work together and make this bill as effective as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, I say to the member, there was a chance yesterday, when the House leader put forward a proposal, to approve it, but you didn't, and I accept that. I accept that. I thought it was a very fair proposal that was put forward, but you disagree, and I think my friend from Trinity-Spadina, in his heart of hearts, probably agrees that it was reasonable. But that's a little different.

I want to correct a misinterpretation. The member for Prince Edward-Lennox—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Hastings.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** —Hastings, I know would not mislead the House at all. But in his best radio voice—somebody said the Rush Limbaugh voice; that's not his voice at all—he suggested that someone has to spend \$10,000. Of course, that is totally, totally inaccurate. I know the member was probably not aware of that, but that is inaccurate information.

We are, in fact, investing millions and millions of dollars in home care. I think there's consensus developing—and I'm glad to see that, because in politics you don't often see that—that it is better to have people, if at all possible, aging at home as opposed to going into an institutional setting.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Or right here.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Or, as the member for Pembroke—Barry's Bay—says, here in this House.

But it is far superior to do that, and I think there's a consensus developing around that. That's why our government has already poured millions of dollars into that kind of care and has committed millions more to it. I think that's an appropriate method in which to move, and I see a consensus developing. I know the former Minister of Health, the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, would agree with that as well.

So there's an opportunity now for the doctor to come back and visit frail, elderly people in their homes, for nurses to do so, for home care to be provided. This is



simply in addition to all of those services this government wishes to provide.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** One of the biggest issues I see in health care, especially with seniors, is worrying about paying their bills. We introduced a different thing: the HST off home heating. This is a cold climate in Ontario. We must look at that before this scheme because this scheme only targets a small part of our population.

I'm fortunate that my parents are in their mid-80s, they live in their own home and they've done well in their lives. But my mother-in-law is going to be 90 years old on her next birthday, and she's not about to go and spend \$10,000, because she doesn't know how long she has. So this program—besides the \$10,000 and you give her \$1,500 back, she pays \$1,300 in HST. I called our building inspector, and there is a \$200 permit involved too, so where are the savings here? It's going to cost her money to do this thing.

We have to look at programs that are going to save people money. That's what I think we should do. People are getting tired of high energy rates, they're getting tired of the taxes that have been imposed on them in the last few years and they're getting tired, sir, of your government doing this shell game which gives nobody anything. We have a deficit, a terrible debt in this province, and people want to see us being more responsible to those things rather than these schemes that don't do anything for our seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Before the member responds for two minutes, I'd just like to remind members that when they leave and enter this chamber, they should acknowledge the Chair. A lot of members are not doing that. Thank you.

Two-minute response?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise and acknowledge the remarks of the member from Prince Edward—Hastings, Timiskaming—Cochrane, the Minister of the Environment and, lastly, the member from Perth—Wellington.

I too, as a member of this House, would really like to see the committees in place. The House leader put forward, as I understand, a motion in the House. I was here, and members had the opportunity to either support it or to turn it down. Certainly, I think on this side of the House, our members were ready to support the formation of the committees and move on. The noes I heard—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** The noes I heard came from the other side of the House, and apparently they're still coming from the other side of the House. So I think we've settled that question: We're prepared to move to committee; the opposition parties seem to have some issues with that. Perhaps they will get sorted out.

Now, I didn't hear from any of the remarks, except from the Minister of the Environment, whether the people who were speaking were actually in favour of that. Because the one thing about this place is that after

all the talking is done, a vote is held. That's your opportunity to stand up and say, "Yes, I agree with that," or "No, I'm not going to support that." It sounded, from what I was hearing from the Conservative side, like they're not in support of this, that it's something that they won't be supporting and that they don't agree that seniors should get the assistance that they need. Now, I think that is wrong; I hope I've been clear about that. I was getting a much better message from the third party; they seemed to be saying that we should be supporting this and we should be supporting more, perhaps, and that's something that I've said in the past that I agree with.

But at some point the rubber has to hit the road on this, and you're either in favour of it or you're opposed to it; you're either flapping your lips about it or you're going to do something about it. It seems to me that the best way you could help the seniors out in this particular circumstance is to support this and to live to fight another day on the other stuff. So I'd ask all members for their support again, Speaker. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** I'm privileged and honoured to be able to address you today in this, my maiden speech in this august chamber. Like most of the members who have preceded me and those who continue to be MPPs, I chose to contest the recent election because I had the firm belief that this Legislature could do more to ensure that every Ontarian enjoyed a full and comprehensive range of government services while enjoying the greatest possible range of personal freedoms.

As a teacher, I watched with growing alarm as graduating students from my high school, Campbellford District High School, found it increasingly difficult to cope with the rising cost of tuition, on the one hand, and decreasing job prospects on the other.

1740

To my former colleagues, the teachers and administration at Campbellford District High School, I want to thank you for the inspiration you have always given me as you go about the important work of educating and inspiring the eager young minds entrusted to your care. I'm immensely proud to have been a teacher for the past 13 years, and I owe a great debt to my colleagues and students with whom I have worked.

I hope you will all recognize in my election success the opportunity we all have to participate in the democratic process and to ensure that our voices are heard. I intend to be an ardent champion for our schools, and I'll fight to ensure that they have all the resources they need to provide the best educational experience for our students. Their future and the future of this province depends on it.

I'm truly humbled to walk in the footprints of those who have shaped this great province, whose counsel has created a province where the bounty of the land has been placed in harness with the indomitable spirit of its people. The result has been a jurisdiction which is the envy of virtually all the world.



Among those who have sat in this hallowed chamber was my great-grandfather, who was elected to represent the riding of York East. John Richardson served from 1894 to 1904. Prior to his service to this Legislature, he served his community as the reeve of Scarborough township.

As a farmer myself, I also have that in common with John Richardson. One hundred years ago, agriculture was the backbone of the Ontario economy, and it's still the single biggest contributor to our gross domestic product, something I wish more Ontarians knew.

In a speech he gave on February 24, 1897, John Richardson "expressed the satisfaction it gave him to represent, in the Legislature, this, the most progressive and intelligent county in this most progressive province of Canada." To the chagrin of my colleagues, I can only echo his proud comments, particularly the part about representing the most intelligent county.

Mr. Speaker, I'm truly excited at the opportunity to work with members from all three parties, as well as my federal counterpart, MP Rick Norlock; the new county warden, Gil Brocanier; the mayors; councillors; and board trustees representing constituencies within the beautiful and vibrant riding of Northumberland-Quinte West. I have complete faith that, together, we can build a riding that is even more prosperous, more compassionate and more committed to finding solutions to all the problems that vex our constituents.

I believe the political system does work, and my commitment to all the constituents of Northumberland-Quinte West is that I will work tirelessly to give them thoughtful, considerate and passionate representation here at Queen's Park.

There are four topics which I believe warrant critical and urgent attention. The first is the protection and conservation of clean water supplies, especially in the GTA but also across this great province. For years, many experts have predicted that water will become the most valuable resource of the 21st century. Source water protection should not be an esoteric concept; instead, it should be the cornerstone for all future planning and development decisions made by the province and the municipalities.

I believe the Planning Act should be updated to place the protection of surface and subsurface water as the most important consideration when new developments are proposed. Just because Ontario is blessed with 7% of all the clean water on this planet does not mean we can afford to take this resource for granted.

Some in this chamber will recall the heated debates about the protection of the Oak Ridges moraine, started by a PC member in 1999, and how those debates ultimately resulted in the then Progressive Conservative government enacting legislation that protected that essential source of water. Ninety-three per cent of the land mass of the moraine, a geological feature that stretches 160 kilometres in width and up to 30 kilometres in breadth, was placed off-limits to development. There are over 400 other moraines in Ontario, and the past eight years have

seen no progress in identifying and protecting other moraines and aquifers.

Protecting ground water is an issue this needs to be handled properly the first time. There is no second chance once an aquifer is drained, covered up or contaminated. I call on all members to join me in demanding the highest possible protection for surface and subsurface water in this province as a reality of our obligations to the residents of Ontario today and as our legacy for generations of Ontarians to come. This is not a theoretical concept, Mr. Speaker. One need only look at the crisis at Attawapiskat to realize the importance of protecting the water supply in this province.

The second of my key issues is actually related to my first. While the current government has incurred a massive debt promoting the use of wind and solar technology, it is neglecting energy resources which, ironically, had already been proven by the time my great-grandfather served in this Legislature over 100 years ago. I'm speaking, of course, of water power.

First used to directly provide energy used in lumber and grist mills all across this province, hydroelectric power has, for the past century, been supplying the low-cost, pollution-free, baseload power that allowed Ontario to attract energy-intensive industries which became the backbone of our economy. Low-cost power was the reason Ontario saw the meteoric employment growth of the 20th century.

My great-grandfather would have seen the impact of the construction of the first hydroelectric facility in Ontario in Niagara Falls. How convinced he must have been that having access to low-cost, reliable, clean power would permit development of Ontario's resources in a fashion that would guarantee that future generations of Ontarians would never lack jobs and would always be on the cutting edge of industrial development. What a shock it would be to him to see another Liberal government destroy that stable, cost-effective energy system and to see it systematically devastate the industrial core of our economy with their misguided and oppressive energy pricing policies.

Water power has had to take a backseat to other, more trendy forms of power generation under the current government. All of us in rural Ontario have seen the backlash to industrial wind farms and, at least in one case in my riding, to a solar farm that was sited without consideration for the impact on surrounding properties.

It seems to me that the solution to creating energy self-sufficiency for almost all regions of this province, starting with the riding of Northumberland-Quinte West, is to re-harness the same sort of water power opportunities which provided energy and jobs across Ontario 100 years ago.

I have been working with Paul Norris, the president of the Ontario Waterpower Association. With Paul's help, we have determined that the potential opportunities in Northumberland-Quinte West alone are staggering. We currently boast 14 water power stations producing 71 megawatts, but there are another 45 sites with the potential to add another 25 megawatts. Combined, that would



mean more power than is consumed by all the homes in my riding. Better yet, 36 of those 45 sites were already developed as mill sites, and many of those retain the historical mill rights which would dramatically accelerate the planning and environmental assessment process.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that within one year, if the government really cared about green energy, we could see the development of literally dozens of new hydro power projects in my riding and up to 2,000 sites province-wide, which would provide lower-cost power from facilities that would last four to five times longer than wind and solar plants.

I'm sure the new Minister of Energy would welcome the addition of vast new supplies of clean, renewable energy, free from the sort of public controversy which seems to be attached to wind and solar plants. It would really help the government meet their green energy goals while recognizing the inherent advantages of water power over other forms of energy generation. I look forward to working with the minister to ensure that a proactive and timely consideration is given to the hydro-electric potential in my riding.

1750

Power generation should not come at the expense of the environment when there are other options that can actually improve the environment. Building new hydro-electric facilities won't just create new power generation in the riding; it will actually have a significant impact on the third area in which I hope to be able to make a significant difference in my riding, namely, tourism.

Northumberland-Quinte West is already blessed with an extraordinary array of natural features, artistic venues, recreational facilities and impressive feats of architecture and engineering, all of which draw tens of thousands of tourists to the riding every year. Whether it's boating on the most popular inland waterway in North America, the Trent-Severn waterway, visiting lovely Presqu'île park on the shores of Lake Ontario, taking in a play at the Capitol theatre in Port Hope, visiting the impressive RCAF museum in Trenton, or admiring the historic buildings, such as Victoria Hall in Cobourg, that form the core of so many of our towns and villages, Northumberland-Quinte West really does have something for everyone.

As diverse and interesting as our riding's tourism offerings are, there is always demand for new recreational opportunities. I'd like to see the ponds that would be formed upstream from every one of those new hydro-electric facilities stocked with fish and bordered with lovely parkettes that would be a perfect venue for a family picnic. I can see any number of new restaurants, tea houses and bed and breakfasts springing up on the scenic shores of these expanded watercourses.

Perhaps the most unique new tourist draw I would like to see developed in my riding would be the covered bridges. These kissing bridges, as they're called, are huge tourist magnets in the Maritimes and the New England states, but there's only one left in all of Ontario, and it's located in Woolwich township, in the fine riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, a riding served with distinction by

my friend and colleague Mike Harris. That bridge is still standing 130 years after it was built, and drawing visitors from around the world.

With many bridges in the riding in need of renovation, this would seem the perfect time to implement such an innovative development, which would serve as a perfect complement to our beautiful natural surroundings while creating one more reason for tourists to visit the great riding of Northumberland-Quinte West.

The fourth issue, Mr. Speaker, could arguably be the most important matter I and the other MPPs will have to wrestle with during this Parliament. My riding, like all the other ridings in Ontario, has been beset by job losses and economic challenges. For over 130 years, Ontario has been the province that led Confederation on a path to almost continuous growth. But sadly, our once mighty province has become a have-not province that collects welfare from the federal government. I am ashamed, Mr. Speaker, that this is the financial legacy of the last eight years of the government in this province.

The proposals I've outlined in this speech would go a long way to restoring full employment to Northumberland-Quinte West. The most recent analysis of water power job creation would suggest that the supply chain for the construction of those 45 sites would bring 525 well-paying jobs to the riding. The tourism components would further stimulate employment in the construction and service industries.

But we can't stop there, of course, and if we ever want to return to the employment levels that Ontario enjoyed under the last PC government, we need to ensure that taxation rates and WSIB rates are frozen or reduced, and all unnecessary government regulations and red tape are eliminated.

Clearly, each of these four issues demands the keen attention of government, and I am committed to working with all members in this Legislature to see that together we harness the resources at our disposal to make sure that clean water, abundant clean energy, increased tourism and significant new job creation are the legacy of our term of office, no matter how long or how short that may be.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't offer my sincerest thanks to those whose hard work, dedication and commitment resulted in my recent election success. My campaign manager, Tina Stephens, ensured that the volunteers were put to best use, the finances were carefully stewarded and, most importantly, the candidate was in the right place at the right time throughout the campaign. Thank you, Tina, for your capable leadership and your ongoing assistance.

Similar thanks go out to my campaign co-chair and sister, Christine Ouellette, who ensured that our 16-hour work days always had someone at the tiller guiding the ship. I can't thank you enough for your time and dedication.

Mary Anne Irwin, our tireless riding association president, provided exceptional advice to the campaign team. I have often referred to Mary Anne as my political mother. Her generosity in sharing decades of experience,



knowledge and wisdom has definitely shaped the approach I took to seeking this office. To you, Mary Anne, my deepest and most sincere gratitude. You were the cornerstone of my victory.

If anyone thinks politics is a transient business, I must pay particular tribute to Adrian Langhorne who, with only a short break, has been the riding CFO since 1952.

Karl Bernhardt, our legal adviser, has another lengthy and storied history of service to the riding association. His counsel on matters legal and otherwise was indispensable to me, and I cannot thank Karl enough for all the time he spent and for his unswerving support.

Getting the funding required to run election campaigns is not an easy task. Bob Dodd and Don Rogers combined together to ensure that we had the funds to run a very successful campaign and I want to extend to both my dearest thanks.

Betty Finnie-Hunt, Dave White and Kim Colton were pivotal in marshalling resources in their respective territories, and without their hard work and leadership, there is quite simply no way we would have been able to effectively reach every corner of the riding.

Troy Stephens did an exceptional job handling almost 3,000 sign requests, setting a new record in our riding. On election day, Grant Dingwall, our get-out-the-vote chair, made sure that thousands of voters who had professed their support got to the polls in a timely fashion.

I cannot possibly name all the volunteers who have given so much of their time prior to election day or all

the financial supporters. To all of you: You have my sincerest gratitude and my commitment that I will work always to justify that support.

I started my discourse this afternoon by talking about an historic family connection to provincial politics; it is only fitting that I close by offering comments on family connections in the present. Of course, I have to reserve my most sincere thanks to my loving wife and best friend, Rebecca; my dear children Linda and Samantha, who give me the greatest inspiration and purpose; my generous and loving parents, Raymond and Susan; my sister Christine Ouellette and her husband, John; my sister Kimberly and her husband, Tim Brough; my brother Bradley and his wife, Jodi. And to all the other members of my family whose efforts went far, far beyond anything I could have expected or asked, I can only say to them that I will always be mindful of the need to comport myself in a dignified, respectful and thoughtful fashion as a tribute to the values they have instilled in me.

It is an honour to carry on my family's tradition of service in this Legislature and I eagerly await future opportunities to participate in the important debates that will shape Ontario for my children and generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The time for debate has ended. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
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Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
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<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West—Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest—Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges—Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton—Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
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Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean—Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga—Brampton South / Mississauga—Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity—Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
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<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa—Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
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Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Rob E. Milligan .....	426
Mr. Jack MacLaren .....	427
Mr. Rob Leone .....	427

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Mental health services

Mr. Jack MacLaren .....	427
-------------------------	-----

### Aboriginal housing

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	427
-------------------------	-----

### Child care

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	427
--------------------------------	-----

### Art Truax

Ms. Laurie Scott .....	428
------------------------	-----

### Argyle Business Improvement Association

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong .....	428
-------------------------------	-----

### Co-op housing

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	428
-----------------------	-----

### Road safety

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	428
--------------------------	-----

### Colin Rickards

Mr. Mike Colle .....	429
----------------------	-----

### Music education

Mr. Steve Clark .....	429
-----------------------	-----

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

### Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act, 2011, Bill 27, Mr. Yakabuski / Loi de 2011 sur l'équité pour tous à l'égard de la taxe sur l'essence, projet de loi 27, M. Yakabuski

First reading agreed to .....	429
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	429

### Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2011, Bill 28, Mr. Zimmer, Mr. Prue, Mrs. Elliott / Loi de 2011 sur les professionnels en ressources humaines inscrits, projet de loi 28, M. Zimmer, M. Prue, Mme Elliott

First reading agreed to .....	430
Mr. David Zimmer .....	430

### Protection of Child Care Centres Act (Extended Day Programs), 2011, Bill 29, Mr. Leone / Loi de 2011 sur la protection des services de garde d'enfants

### (programmes de jour prolongé), projet de loi 29, M. Leone

First reading agreed to .....	430
Mr. Rob Leone .....	430

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Renewable energy

Mr. John O'Toole .....	430
------------------------	-----

### Access to health care

Mme France Gélinas .....	430
--------------------------	-----

### Job relocation

Mr. Phil McNeely .....	431
------------------------	-----

### Male breast cancer

Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	431
--------------------------	-----

### Affordable housing

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	431
----------------------------	-----

### Wind turbines

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	432
----------------------------	-----

### Transfert d'emplois

M. Phil McNeely .....	432
-----------------------	-----

### Wind turbines

Mr. Todd Smith .....	432
----------------------	-----

### Diagnostic services

Mme France Gélinas .....	432
--------------------------	-----

### Rural schools

Mr. Jim Wilson .....	433
----------------------	-----

### Child care

Mr. Rob Leone .....	433
---------------------	-----

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	434
Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	434
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	434
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	434
Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	435
Ms. Cindy Forster .....	435
Mr. Mario Sergio .....	435
Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	435
Ms. Cindy Forster .....	436
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	437
Mr. John O'Toole .....	437
Mr. Jagmeet Singh .....	438
Mr. Mario Sergio .....	438
Ms. Cindy Forster .....	439
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	439

Mr. Rick Nicholls .....	440
Mr. John Vanthof.....	441
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	441
Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	441
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	442
Mr. Rick Nicholls .....	442
Mr. John Vanthof.....	443
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	444
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	444
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	444
Mr. Rick Nicholls .....	445
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	445
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	446
Ms. Cindy Forster .....	447
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	447
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer.....	447
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	448
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	448
Mr. Todd Smith .....	449
Mr. John Vanthof.....	450
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	450
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	451
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	451
Mr. Rob E. Milligan .....	451
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	454



## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 7 December 2011 / Mercredi 7 décembre 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Accepting Schools Act, 2011, Bill 13, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2011 pour des écoles tolérantes, projet de loi 13, Mme Broten</b>	
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	403
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	412
Mr. Michael Prue .....	412
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield .....	413
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	413
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	413
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	414

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	414
L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	414
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	414
Mr. Monte McNaughton .....	414
Hon. Rick Bartolucci .....	414
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	414
Mrs. Teresa Piruzza .....	414
Mr. Reza Moridi .....	414
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	414
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	414
<b>Special report, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	414
<b>Wayne Butt</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	414

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Government's record</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	415
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	415
<b>Government's record</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	415
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	416
<b>Energy policies</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	416
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	416
<b>Automobile insurance</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	417
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	417

<b>Renewable energy</b>	
Mr. Victor Fedeli .....	418
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	418
<b>Health care</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	419
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	419
<b>Education</b>	
Ms. Soo Wong .....	419
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	419
<b>Private career colleges</b>	
Mr. Rob Leone .....	420
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	420
<b>Winter highway maintenance</b>	
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	420
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	421
<b>Air-rail link</b>	
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	421
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	421
<b>Waste diversion</b>	
Mr. Michael Harris .....	422
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	422
<b>Cancer treatment</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	422
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	422
<b>Violence against women</b>	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	423
Hon. John Milloy .....	423
Hon. Laurel C. Broten .....	423
<b>Public transit</b>	
Mr. Frank Klees .....	423
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	423
<b>Soldiers' remains</b>	
Mr. Paul Miller .....	424
Hon. Michael Chan .....	424
<b>Post-secondary education</b>	
Ms. Dipika Damerla .....	424
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	425

### DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

<b>Throne speech debate</b>	
Motion agreed to .....	426

*Continued on inside back cover*

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**Thursday 8 December 2011**

**Jeudi 8 décembre 2011**



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 8 December 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 8 décembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in a moment of silence and reflection, especially at this time of year, for those less fortunate.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 7, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I did listen intently to what I thought was a very fine speech by the new member from Northumberland—Quinte West. He follows in the footsteps of a lot of very distinguished members from that riding.

First of all, we remind ourselves of the Rev. John Foote, VC, who represented that riding and of course was a member of the Frost and Robarts executive councils. He was the gentleman who, as padre, evacuated wounded Canadian soldiers from Dieppe in 1942.

He was followed by the Honourable Russell Rowe, who was a former Speaker of this Legislature and whose portrait is on the first floor of this august body; then by people like Joan Fawcett, who was always closely associated with the development of the Big Apple in Colborne, Ontario; Howard Sheppard, who had a great career here, and who went on to distinguish himself with the Hamilton mutual insurance company in Port Hope and Cobourg; Dr. Doug Galt; and, of course, a friend to many in this House over the last eight years and a good friend of mine, Lou Rinaldi, who served this riding so ably over eight years—a former mayor of Brighton, Ontario. He and his family own Brighton Speedway, which has

always been a great source of entertainment for many people in that area.

Certainly, we welcome the new member, a teacher at Campbellford high school and a beef farmer. We know that he will make a contribution to this chamber over the next number of years. I certainly welcome him and his family, who were with us yesterday when he delivered his maiden speech, which is always a very special occasion when a new member comes into this House. I wish him all the very best over the next number of years.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Are we good?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Go for it.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sorry for the confusion. I thought it was me and apparently it still is, so that's a good thing.

I'd also like to congratulate the member for Northumberland—Quinte West on his maiden speech and welcome him to this place. As one of our new 16-member rookie camp here, the MPP for Northumberland—Quinte West is certainly a valued addition to our team on this side of the House. He is a teacher and a farmer, both honourable professions.

Mr. Speaker, I met his family a while ago—a very strong family man—and I note that his great-grandfather, I think, was a member of this place many, many decades, maybe a century or more, ago.

I want to commend the member for his maiden speech. He had a great speech. He talked about his riding and about what it means to be in this place. I think we are all privileged, being 107 members of 13 million citizens of Ontario. When you put that number in that contrast, 107 people who get the privilege of serving in this Legislature, it really is truly an honour, and I look forward to working with the member for Northumberland—Quinte West as we move into our Christmas break and come back in the new year.

It's always a great occasion to have a maiden speech and to be able to deliver it in this place. I love how he drew on the history from himself and from his riding. It's always a great opportunity to have that linkage from our past and remember that we are privileged people. We are serving the people of Ontario, and I look forward to doing that with the member.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I would also like to take this opportunity to comment on the maiden speech of the mem-



ber from Northumberland—Quinte West. I really enjoyed the speech. It was obvious how proud you are of your family, how proud you are of where you came from. As a fellow farmer, I feel that down here, just like you did.

A lot of things you mentioned in your maiden speech were things that were the same in your riding as in my riding and in much of Ontario. You really laid out the goals you had for your riding, and I think deep down we all have goals within ourselves for our ridings. A lot of yours and mine matched. The water power thing is a big idea in Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Funny how that is, John.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yeah, it's funny how a lot of our things match.

But it really shone, though, how much the member—I think he represents all the members in this House, how much we truly believe in this system, how hard we are all willing to fight and argue. But we are all looking for the same goals: to make life better for the people of Ontario, make life better in our ridings—

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** More affordable.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** More affordable—I'll use that one.

But your speech really touched a chord in me. I think it touched a chord in anyone listening. Especially for rural people, it really touched a chord. I think your past as a teacher showed, because you taught us all something with your speech. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Good. Glad to hear that. Pleased to engage in response.

I had a chance to hear the speech yesterday afternoon, and I want to say to the member, as one who has been here a few years, that the kind of politics in which we engage in our society today is substantially different, and I hope that he would join that group of people who want to see it revert to a more civil discourse. I think he mentioned in his speech, which I thought was commendable, that kind of discourse taking place. There are debates in this House that will generate some heat; a few that might even generate some light on the circumstances surrounding the province and what is needed to solve the challenges that the province has.

But I can say I've seen evolve over the years a different kind of politics that I know he will want to challenge. The personal attacks we tend to see all over now in politics around the world may have been there to a certain extent before, but they are creeping into our society now.

0910

I can recall a somewhat more civil discourse that took place when I arrived here, and Mr. Davis—Premier Davis—was the Premier at the time. There were a number of people who had served a number of years. Yes, there were some, as I say, heated exchanges, but I think there was a good deal of respect when the debate was over amongst members and a sense of collegiality which I think is beneficial. There are those who don't think

that's beneficial; I happen to think that is beneficial. So I was encouraged to hear the member say that he wanted to see the Legislature in its minority situation work well together, and I think that's a commendable sentiment.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

The member from Northumberland—Quinte West, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** I would like to just thank the fine member from Peterborough for his kind comments and making due note of the distinguished members who have served my great riding of Northumberland—Quinte West in the past. You know, I honestly believe that those individuals have given Northumberland—Quinte West the best service that they could provide. They've obviously served with distinction. I'm very humbled to follow in their footsteps, and I will not let them down.

To the member from Cambridge, my esteemed colleague Rob Leone, I greatly appreciate Rob's kind contributions and sentiments in working with him and others in this hallowed chamber for the betterment of every Ontarian.

For the member of Timiskaming—Cochrane, thank you very much for those kind words. It really does come from the heart as I'm sure it does from every member who stands in this chamber. They have a passion, they have beliefs that they want to stand up for, and they have to represent their constituents in a dignified manner. I just want to let you know that I'm obviously thankful to be here working with such fine individuals.

For the honourable Minister of the Environment, thank you very much. You're absolutely right: One of my hopeful legacies is going to be one of civility. Obviously, heated debate is something that does occur. However, we must be mindful that we have to always be respectful of the individuals with whom we are dealing. You and everyone else here are elected officials, and our constituents expect the best.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House of yesterday's agreement concerning the rotation of the debate on this bill. The official opposition will now be skipped until the next round.

Further debate? The member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to wish you my sincerest congratulations on being named Speaker in this House. I do know that you will do an incredible job. Of course, I believe your predecessor, the honourable Alvin Curling, was a Speaker and certainly did a very admirable job when he was in the Speaker's chair. Your great history of public life here in Toronto, representing Scarborough so ably, many years on council there, then moving on to Metro council and now here at Queen's Park—your community is truly proud, Mr. Speaker, of all your accomplishments over the last many years.

I had better get to the bill here, Bill 2, dealing with the healthy homes renovation tax credit. You know, I've had the opportunity over the last couple of weeks—I know I



said in a two-minuter that I visited my friend Vance Robbins, who operates Anden kitchen and bath in Peterborough. He and I had a great discussion about this bill. There are a significant number of seniors in Peterborough riding. I had the opportunity to chat with many of them during the 28-day campaign and over the last eight years that I've had the wonderful privilege of representing them in the riding of Peterborough, and to visit Activity Haven, which, in co-operation with the federal government—we've done some major renovations. They're located on Bernardo Avenue in Peterborough. I think they've got about 3,000 or 4,000 members. They have activities there each and every day and a wide variety of programs to keep seniors active. I had the opportunity to chat with them about the healthy homes renovation tax credit—and it doesn't matter whether you spend \$100 or \$500 or \$1,000, you can take advantage of the healthy homes renovation tax credit.

I do know, as I said, Vance Robbins at Anden kitchen and bath and Drew Merrett, who operates Home Hardware in Peterborough. In fact, Drew Merrett is the son-in-law of a former distinguished member from the riding of Peterborough, Mr. Gary Stewart. I've had the opportunity to meet with Drew, and he's anxious to see seniors come into his Home Hardware, a very successful one. In fact, over the last year he's installed solar panels on the top of his Home Hardware operation. Anybody that is in the Peterborough area over the next couple of weeks, it's located on Lansdowne Street West. They have customer service that is second to none. So I would encourage everybody to drop by Drew Merrett's Home Hardware and get some pre-Christmas bargains.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I hope Drew is watching today.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Drew, in fact, may be watching this morning. He could very well be.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Send him a Hansard anyway.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I will do that. As my friend the member from St. Catharines said, I will send Drew the Hansard. I will send Vance the Hansard, too.

But I also want to talk about my friend Gus. Now, Gus has a kitchen and bath operation on Erskine Avenue. As many of you may know, Erskine Avenue is in the south end of Peterborough. It's been an expanding business over the last number of years. I was in to see him about a week ago; I was looking for a new bathroom sink. I said to Gus, "What do you think about this healthy homes renovation tax credit?" and he said, "Jeff, this is a very positive thing for our business." He said, "I've got a large clientele of seniors that come in every week and they're looking for the opportunity to get those new showers and bathtubs that are easily accessible when you have mobility problems." He was really supportive of this, along with our tax changes in the province of Ontario. Gus told me it took a lot of time for his accounting to look at ways that he was filing a tax return with the government of Canada, a tax return with the province of Ontario. He indicated that it's good news that we've amalgamated

things together. Now, as a small business operator, he just files one tax return.

During the campaign, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to visit the new Mapleridge seniors' centre. It's a brand new centre that was constructed on Brealey Drive in Peterborough. The land was donated by the Batten family, a long-distinguished family in Peterborough. They donated the property. The federal government, working with my federal colleague, Mr. Del Mastro, myself and the city of Peterborough—and the dollars that were raised at the Mapleridge seniors' centre. I mean, I've gone to some of their fairs where they've been selling wonderful muffins and fresh apple pies, and just want to congratulate all the great work that they've done over many years to raise those dollars.

They opened a brand new centre on Brealey Drive. I got the opportunity to be there for the official opening, along with my good friend Councillor Jack Doris. Jack and his good buddy Glenn Padgett were here at Queen's Park just recently to hear the speech from the throne: a real opportunity for those two gentlemen who have been in public life for many years in Peterborough, to come here and have the opportunity to see the throne speech. I must say, in Jack Doris's case, he is a cousin of my good friend the member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Exactly. Good member. He was the mayor.

0920

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** He was the mayor of Peterborough. But I must say that Jack, for many, many years, was a well-known Progressive Conservative, but in the last couple of years, he joined the Leal bandwagon to make sure there was effective representation here at Queen's Park. In fact, Mr. Doris was the federal Progressive Conservative candidate in the federal election of 1972. He was a great admirer of Bob Stanfield. But I must say that Jack and Sheila and their family have seen the light; they had that Saul on the road to Damascus conversion, and now they're with us to provide progressive leadership for the great folks in Peterborough riding.

Let me get back to the bill here. I think it has a lot of very positive aspects. It will help seniors stay in their homes longer. I know when I chat with the local CCAC in Peterborough, they're very supportive of this measure.

We also have a lot of folks in Peterborough who want to have the opportunity to have a mother or dad come back into their home. This will give them the opportunity to renovate their home and retrofit it for a senior mother or father to bring that family back together, which is so important.

It will also relieve pressure on our long-term-care home costs and support 10,500 jobs per year, which I would say is a very conservative estimate for the impact of this particular initiative. It certainly will continue to support the home renovation sector here in Ontario with approximately \$800 million.

We also look forward of course—part of our platform is to add three million more hours of home care in the



province of Ontario. We look forward to making that happen over the next number of years.

If passed, this bill will become effective October 1, 2011. So I say to the residents of Peterborough riding, anybody who was involved in any home renovation projects for seniors after October 1, keep those receipts. Put them away in a safe spot in order to make the claim on your 2011 income tax.

This program, of course, will be funded through our fiscal measures, adding no more to our fiscal outlays here in the province of Ontario, and it will be offset by savings in other areas that we all contemplate will happen in the next little while.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, this is a take-up similar to that of the federal 2009 home renovation tax credit. Up to 380,000 people benefit from that credit each and every year. I know my friend yesterday, my colleague from York West, certainly outlined to people in this chamber all the things that can be done: grab bars, easy-access showers, a chairlift to get upstairs.

Just recently, I was in the home of Tom Symons, the founding president of Trent University, and because of Tom's mobility challenge, he has installed a chairlift in his home on Park Street. In fact, the Symons home was right beside a former Speaker's home: John Turner, who was the Speaker here from 1981 to 1985.

You can see that this credit is historic, as my friend from Trinity-Spadina would say, an historic development here for the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I first want to sort of—it might be my only time today, but I have a very important announcement. I wish everyone to pay attention. Last night, there was the press gallery party here, and I had a phone call, and it was my daughter calling from England. She just had a baby last night.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Was it a boy or a girl?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It was a little boy, yes. I'm very proud. She lives in Sevenoaks, which is in Kent, just outside London. She's a teacher there. I'm very happy. This is her third child. Her name is Marnie Lines, and I thought that was more important.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Boy or girl?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It was a little boy. Now she has three boys.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** How much does he weigh?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I believe he was eight pounds, but they do everything in metric, I guess.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** You mean the imperial system is gone in England? Is nothing sacred?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yeah, the imperial system. Anyway, I found that the most wonderful Christmas gift is to have a healthy grandchild—our ninth grandchild.

When it comes to this senior credit here, I might need it before many other people here. I would qualify, except perhaps I have—the problem is there are too many arcane

little rules around it. You can't increase the value of your home; that doesn't make any sense at all to me.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** You've got to do a crappy job.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, you have to hire somebody who's not competent, I guess.

In fact, many seniors that I talked to during the election were quite concerned about paying their electricity bill. I thought the NDP, a couple of weeks ago, had a very good idea. Tim Hudak, our leader—we had the same idea in our playbook. That was to give all consumers the HST off their hydro bill. I think that credit would have gone a long way to making life more affordable for everyone in Ontario. That bill, although it passed—because the opposition is now the majority in the House, and we voted united, together, which is a good thing.

Here's another bill that doesn't really help anyone except by raising money for the government; it's a tax.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd just like to start off by congratulating the member for Peterborough on his third maiden speech and for the tour of Peterborough. Thanks very much.

Actually, Speaker, I've heard some debate across the floor about, "Well, you don't have to spend the \$10,000; you can spend \$2,000 or \$3,000." I don't know what you can get for 2,000 bucks, but not too much these days.

On the \$10,000, if you had the \$10,000, and if you could even borrow the \$10,000—most seniors can't get a lot of loans from the banks to borrow, anyway, but if you could get the \$10,000, you're going to pay \$1,300 on HST—that's a great savings—and they're going to give you \$1,500 back. So you've got 200 bucks in your pocket, and by the time you pay the hydro bill for the week, you've got nothing.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Historic.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** It's historic, all right. It's the best shell game I've seen in a while.

Of course, then they'll say, "Well, you guys should vote for it." Because it's something for the public and we naturally like to help them, we'll vote for it, even though they're being tricked again.

Once again, we've got a half—I don't want to say the word—a half you-know-what bill with no substance and a lot of malarkey. We'll be more than happy to—probably I'll have to stand up and put on that face I put on when I have to vote with you all the time; I'll be very upset. I'll have to go and have an Alka-Seltzer or something after because I'll be upset. And it will happen again, I'm sure, to the glee and pleasure of the members.

By the way, if you want to be serious about it, I don't know what \$10,000 is going to do for the people who live in those reserves up north. You know they're living in tents. They're starving. They're living in sheds. Let's be a little realistic. If you want to really help the people of this province, take the HST off the renovation costs and take the HST off the builders that are doing it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? The member for York West.



**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations. That looks very nice; I wish you would stay there for a long time.

I have to congratulate our member here, our colleague from Peterborough, for a well-thought discussion on Bill 2. I have to say that—and thank God—we have some 600, 700 nursing homes that we put our seniors in because they have needs to be in there.

At the same time, for seniors who are not at that particular stage in their life and they are still living in their home, and they want to live in their home longer and, hopefully, have a safer and healthier life, I think we should do everything we can to allow them to live longer in their home. As the member for Peterborough was saying, it doesn't matter how many seniors this would benefit; it does not matter. There are other benefits in there that include all the seniors, all the low-income seniors, the middle-income seniors.

I think my friend the member from Trinity-Spadina should be familiar with those benefits, but for his information, just in case he is not aware, seniors already enjoy a number of other benefits, such as \$625 a year for the Ontario seniors' home properties, and the Ontario energy and property tax credit: \$900 to a maximum of \$1,025. They already enjoy 10% off their hydro bill. Of the low-to middle-income seniors, 93% don't pay any more provincial taxes, which is a saving of \$355 a year, and a new home—

0930

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Mr. Speaker, my time is up. Thank you so much for your time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you for the tour of Peterborough. I go to Peterborough often for business and know a lot of people in the member's riding. I know the Dalliday family very well—a very good family, Gary and Pete Dalliday.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** They're friends of mine, too.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Yes, they're friends of mine, too. We'll have a chat about you when I see them next; that's for sure.

I did get a nice Christmas card from the member a few days ago. He has a lovely family, and I know they're going to enjoy their gifts from the Home Hardware store there, as I know that's where the member will be doing most of his shopping.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague Mr. O'Toole from Durham on the birth of his ninth grandchild. That's something else. Way to go. Unbelievable.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** He doesn't look that old.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I know, but he is that old, sir, and that's why he is concerned about this healthy homes renovation tax credit, or, as I like to call it, the wealthy homes renovation tax credit, because you have to have a lot of money in order to take advantage of this. If the government over on the other side has \$60 million or so

to throw around on seniors, I think it should be a little bit more focused on something that's actually going to provide help to seniors.

As I said yesterday and several times in the House when I've had the opportunity to comment on this wealthy homes renovation tax credit, the seniors in Prince Edward-Hastings just don't have \$10,000 at their disposal to improve their homes. What they would rather have is what we proposed during the election campaign and what we've teamed up to do with our colleagues from the NDP: to provide a break on HST on home heating fuel. That's the way to go. That's going to create more money in the economy. It's going to create jobs and sustain the jobs that we have.

So we need to give some relief to families who can't afford \$10,000 on home renovations right now, especially at this time of year, when perhaps they'd go shopping at the Home Hardware in Peterborough. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

Member for Peterborough, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to sincerely thank the members from Durham, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, York West and Prince Edward-Hastings in providing some commentary on the remarks I made this morning.

It's 9:30. I'm just told that people are lined up right now in front of Drew Merrett's Home Hardware on Lansdowne Street West. I gave him the opportunity of a little free publicity. I'm told they're lined up at Gus's and Anden's. They're all flocking this morning to take advantage of this healthy homes renovation tax credit.

But on a more serious note, my good friend the member from Prince Edward-Hastings had mentioned the Dalliday family. Two weeks ago they had a fundraiser for Tim Dalliday in Peterborough. Tim has just received a liver transplant that he was waiting for for a very long time. Karen and I had the opportunity to join with Gary and Donna and their families at a fundraising event at the historic Montreal House in Peterborough, which in fact is right across from my constituency office. All of the community came together in Peterborough to raise money for Tim Dalliday, for his wife and their family, to make their Christmas a little better as he recuperates from the liver transplant that was performed by a great medical team right here in Toronto.

But I do know, Mr. Speaker, that when I get home this evening to Peterborough, I'll get a report from some of these small businesses that we gave a little publicity to this morning, encouraging those seniors in the Peterborough riding—perhaps this morning they're at an event at Activity Haven or Mapleridge seniors' centre—to get down to Home Hardware, Home Depot, Rona, all those great businesses in my community, to take advantage of the healthy homes renovation tax credit and make their homes ready for seniors. Thanks so much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from—I've got a problem there—



**Interjection:** Mississauga–Streetsville.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Good morning, Speaker. I would think that after all the time that we'd served together, if I can remember Scarborough–Rouge River, perhaps you can remember Mississauga–Streetsville.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's the day before Christmas and the spirit of goodwill will pervade throughout the House.

It's a pleasure to get up here and to greet my fellow members and to congratulate the member from Durham on his ninth grandchild. Speaker, this is a member that I've had the privilege of serving opposite for a long time. He's a good hockey player and he keeps talking about being a senior, but he can still play hockey like a guy who is merely a fraction of his age. It's always a pleasure to go into the dressing room and get ready to play with the member from Durham.

We're here to talk about something that's important to me as a member of the baby boom generation and important to a lot of my constituents in our neighbourhoods of Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville, and that's this healthy home renovation tax credit. The need for that tax credit is driven by some of the demographics we see here in the legislative chamber on this, the Thursday before the Christmas recess, and the demographics that we see in our communities, not merely in western Mississauga but all across the province of Ontario.

Those essential demographics are basically this: For every senior in our communities now, every person aged 65 and over, when we, the baby boomers, are ourselves mostly in our senior years—and I say that because on January 1, 2011, the first member of the baby boom generation, that generation born between the years of 1946 and 1966, turned 65 years old, on New Year's Day of this year. The baby boomers are gradually and quickly moving into their senior years, so we have to be ready. Those decisions that we make as a Legislature now are going to have a great deal of impact on the generation that follows the seniors who are now the ones who will be the beneficiaries of the healthy home renovation tax credit.

For every senior alive today, when the baby boomers are themselves mostly seniors, there will be two. For every octogenarian person, aged 80 or above, alive today, when we, the baby boomers, are ourselves mostly in our 80s—a frightening thought for all of us—there will be three. What are we going to do? Should we be building more and more facilities for our seniors? Yes, we have to do that as well. But where do seniors really want to age? When we've asked them that, when they've come to our meetings, they've been virtually unanimous: They'd like to age at home. They'd like to age in the place that they raised their children and the community they have lived in for the last however many years. Seniors would like to age at home.

That's basically what this healthy home renovation tax credit is all about. It isn't about making your home more saleable, because that's not what seniors want to do.

What they really need to do is to say, "I don't get on as well as I did; I need a ramp to be able to get up to my house. I can't negotiate the stairs; I'd like to be able to build a ramp." That's the sort of thing that the healthy home renovation tax credit is there to do: help them build a ramp. If you're having trouble getting up the stairs, it helps you build a lift that gets you up the stairs. Even in things that are smaller—for example, most staircase railings are more decorative than they are functional. How can we take some of the things in our homes that may be decorative and make them functional, like reinforced stair railings? It's not a big thing, but it's an important thing. The healthy home renovation tax credit would enable people to do that as well.

Speaker, the cost of the healthy home renovation tax credit is offset by savings in other areas. I think Ontarians grasped, during the election, when our party came out and we offered the fewest promises of the three, and our promises were all fully costed and the others were not, and our promises were the lowest cost platform of the three—the highest, by the way, were the Conservatives: 10 times the price of the programs that were offered by the Liberals; 10 times. So, it was a frugal platform, and this is one of the things that we say, "We can fund this by finding savings in other areas."

0940

Now, I've talked about some of the things that you can do with the healthy home renovation tax credit. You can also make your bathroom a lot more functional. A lot of times, seniors say, "I'd like to have a tub that I can get into and get out of. This mitigates the need for people to need to come in to assist me with bathing and whatnot." But it also is part of a whole series of measures that make life more liveable for seniors.

For example, all seniors—indeed, all Ontarians—received a permanent cut in their Ontario personal taxes on January 1, 2010: important to remind you. Many seniors had themselves removed permanently from the Ontario tax rolls in 2010: another benefit. The Ontario clean energy benefit takes 10% off of your electricity bill. Now, some of the other parties are saying, "Well, we want to take the HST off of your electricity bill." Well, in other words, what they want to do is increase your electricity cost by 2%, and we're against that. We don't think that seniors should have their electricity costs raised. We took 10% off, and not just off the electricity portion but off the whole thing. Off the entire thing, including the distribution cost, and they conveniently forget to mention that. We took 10% off the whole bill, period.

The other thing that seniors have is their senior energy and property tax credit. What does that amount to? It amounts to all of the HST on some \$13,750 worth of things that have not been taxed before. For seniors, that covers a lot of the HST, or probably all of it, that you'll pay in being able to use the tax credit proposed in this bill.

There's also the sales tax credit. Each and every year, each person is eligible for a sales tax credit equivalent to all of the HST on \$6,250 worth of purchases that had not



been taxed before. You add that to the senior energy and property tax credit and what you've got is all of the HST on about \$20,000 paid for a senior couple.

Now, the other guys just keep wanting to rebate you the same thing twice, but they don't tell you what they're going to cut in order to do it. They don't tell you how much they're going to raise your taxes in order to do it. We're not going to raise your taxes. We've said that very clearly: We're not going to raise your taxes. The Conservatives say that they're going to raise your taxes, but we're not going to raise your taxes.

If, as a senior, you're helping your grandchildren get through university, you should know that your grandchildren, beginning next year, have a 30% tuition cut: another thing that's going to ease some of the pressure that you may feel to help your family members, your children and your grandchildren get along.

So this particular tax credit, Speaker, the healthy homes tax credit, is just one of a whole series of measures that are income-tested. Some of the members opposite have talked about, "Oh, well, we should take the HST off of both electricity and gas." So who are the major beneficiaries? They're not going to be you, if you're a senior, because you already have your HST taken off of that. But they will benefit you if you have a monster home. I don't think asking people of very modest means to subsidize more tax credits to the very wealthy is a good idea, and when I went out door-knocking in the neighbourhoods of Lisgar and Meadowvale and Streetsville, my neighbours didn't think so either. That's why they voted for us and our platform and not for them and their platform.

This healthy homes tax credit, this tax credit that allows you to renovate your home, as a senior, to make it a little bit easier to stay there; to make it easier to get up and down your stairs; to make it a little bit easier to install a ramp so you can get in and out of your house; to make it a little bit easier to get around inside your house; to do the things that you, as a senior, know that, as you can't get along and get around as much as you used to—how you spend that tax credit is something that's up to you. Make your life simpler, easier. Make your house more manageable your way. It's not prescriptive. It's one of the things that allows you to custom-tailor how your tax credit is going to get spent in your circumstances, in your house, on your time and on your terms.

Combined with the permanent reduction in taxes, combined with the fact that for most seniors, they've been pretty much permanently removed from the tax rolls—if you're below about \$40,000 worth of income you no longer pay any income tax at all—combined with the fact that the senior energy and property tax credit plus the sales tax credit give you back all of the HST on nearly \$20,000 worth of purchases made, I think this is a good addition and a good thing to support.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Now, I would say the member from Mississauga–Streetsville was very kind in his response in how fortunate I am to have another grandchild.

But when he got into the hockey part, he didn't tell the whole story: He was actually the goalie. We actually had a pretty good team until you got to the blue line, and from there on it was a bit—but it got tweaked. He was very attentive. He always let everyone get a goal, so that they felt included. No, but he was a good team player, and we did have a lot of fun and hopefully will again. But the issue there is Jean-Marc Lalonde, who was a member here before, a great and very popular member: His main duty over there was to arrange the hockey and the games and the tournaments and stuff like that. He's no longer with us, so I don't know whether there will be more hockey, to be honest.

But on the bill itself, I think he's really kind of again missing the point. It's sort of like trying to do everything for everyone and doing nothing for anyone. That's what I see this bill doing. It sounds good because I have heard from seniors that they're finding it difficult. With the cost of living and whether it's the price of gasoline, municipal taxes, your hydro bill, your cable bill, if you aren't making \$30,000 a year today, you are probably the working poor today, honestly, if you have house insurance, auto insurance. The auditor's report told us everything is costing more—pretty well everything. He went right down the list. Energy was the most critical file by the Auditor General. If you went down to the next part, it was auto insurance.

I would say that the track we're on is that seniors do need help. This bill doesn't do it. In fact, I think it's right backward. Why can't you, if you're spending \$10,000, increase the value of your home? What's so wrong about that? You know, our member from Mississauga–Streetsville is a well-intentioned, kind-hearted person. Thanks for the good remarks, but you should read the bill again and have a look at it because, really, it doesn't do what you think it does.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Just a couple of things to my friend from Mississauga–Streetsville: I appreciate all the comments you made and all the other Liberals are making around this.

But I'm not quite sure, when you say it is not prescriptive, that it is correct. You're saying people have a choice, and you make it appear like they can if they want to, and they don't have to if they don't. The simple point I make to you is that it's not a matter of choice; it's a matter of affordability. And so if you can afford it, my suspicion is that they will do it. I would. If I don't have the money, I just won't be able to. So your notion about not prescriptive is entirely wrong, is the one point.

Connected to that, I say that if this program only serves 1% of the population, do you not feel a tad guilty about the one-percenters versus the 99% of the seniors who won't be eligible and won't be able to take advantage? In other words, do you feel somewhat bad or guilty that only the very wealthy will have access to a program that you argue is a good program?

I would like you to comment on that because those two points are, in my mind, very important. I hope you



and the Liberals would distance yourselves from the one-percenters, and that you are with the other folks, the Toronto protestors that have been saying that we are with the 99%. Again, the one-percenters. I'd like to know where you stand on that one.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to make a brief comment in response to the remarks that were offered by the member Mississauga—Streetsville. I really appreciate the member's comments about the impact or who will benefit from the proposal from the opposition members that it's a too simplistic view about taking the HST off home heating, that it really does not have the desired effect that's being purported, that it's going to be some sort of relief across the board for everyone. If you look at it from a public policy point of view, every expert will tell you that those who will benefit the most from that type of relief are those who own big homes, who use a lot of heating. So I think the same arguments about choice that the member from Trinity—Spadina was making will apply to the proposal that has been presented here.

0950

What the healthy home renovation tax credit does, in fact, is that it's a targeted relief to seniors to attain a certain goal, the goal being that the seniors can continue to live in their own home as long as possible. I think that is what we are trying to achieve.

Just giving a broad tax relief which is not targeted in any way whatsoever and, in fact, is going to undermine conservation—that's your proposal—because it's going to make it easy for people to just burn as much oil as possible to heat their homes, is not going to reach any goal whatsoever. Therefore, I'm very supportive of the healthy home renovation tax credit.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? The member from Barrie.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll take a moment just to congratulate you, too, on your new position as Deputy Speaker.

I'd just like to take a couple of moments, too, to speak to the healthy home tax credit. As my colleague mentioned, it's probably better termed the wealthy renovation tax credit. Let's just call it what it is.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Are you with the one-percenters or the 99-percenters?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Let's go with the 99-percenters on this one.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Member for Trinity—Spadina, come to order.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Let's call this what it is, really, which is window-dressing for the Liberals. This isn't addressing anything of any substance. It's more of what we've seen in other stuff; it's smoke and mirrors.

What we really need is to create relief for everybody across the board. If we really want to help seniors, let's get more long-term-care beds, more home care for seniors. My own grandmother is 90 years old, and my grand-

mother is not going to be able to use this tax credit to any sort of advantage to herself whatsoever, nor will any of the seniors whose doors I knocked on.

When I knocked on seniors' doors—and I knocked on 50,000 doors in this election, for several months. Over and over again, what people showed me was their hydro bill and their heating bills. We don't have a choice in Ontario about whether or not we heat our homes. We offered a program, along with the NDP, that will give people broad tax relief—seniors of all income levels. Wealthy seniors will do their renovations regardless. Poor seniors will no more readily be able to pay the \$8,500 portion than the \$10,000, under this bill, than they would have before. It only helps a very small group of rich and poor, and there will only be a small subgroup in the middle that this will actually benefit.

We need broader relief for everybody in this economy. Further to that, do we really even know how much it costs? We're talking about \$135 million a year. What is it, really? What do you mean by this?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Mississauga—Streetsville, two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have to say to my colleague from Durham—who has been an old friend for a while, and we do enjoy needling each other in the Legislature—the thing that the member for Durham has to remember is that you never let your goalie get in the last word. Do you know the hardest thing about the shot from the member from Durham? It's waiting for it to arrive. We of the goal-tending fraternity refer to it as the “dying quail wrist-shot.”

To my friend from Trinity—Spadina: I think my colleague summed it up exquisitely. If I remember his words correctly, he said, “You can if you want to, but you don't have to if you don't need to”—perfect. That's exactly right. That's all it is. If you actually need to do this sort of thing, you can.

This is a bill for the 90% who do need help—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The 99%.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** The 90%, 99%; let's call it what we wish—with simple things like ramps; like reinforcing your railings; with lifts; with a tub. This is the sort of thing that you need to do; you've got your choice to do it.

Now, you see, Speaker, the member for Ottawa, he gets it. He gets it: This is for people of modest means, to enable them to make their homes more accessible to themselves as seniors to allow them to do the thing that they want to do, which is to stay in their homes. They don't believe the member from Barrie—by the way, congratulations on your election. The member for Barrie is proposing measures that aren't going to help seniors stay in their homes. He may not want his seniors to stay in their homes, but we do, and that's the reason for the healthy homes renovation tax credit—simple things like tubs, lifts, ramps and things that help you stay in your home as a senior.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?



**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm very happy to be able to stand to talk about the healthy homes renovation tax credit because I think it is something that needs to be put in a context of a number of issues that we're confronting as a society. I think it's plain to all of us that there are quite a few people coming—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I was wondering about the rotation. The last speaker from the Liberal side had their 10 minutes. It actually should have gone to our member.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I didn't see your member standing.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He was getting up. I'm not trying to be difficult. I'm raising a point that the floor actually belonged to our side.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to cede and speak after.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** If I could get him to stand quickly, that would be good. Thanks.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The chair will recognize the member from Cambridge.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you. Merry Christmas. Thanks for that gift. I appreciate that.

I'm happy to stand here on behalf of our PC Party here in the Legislature to talk about the healthy homes renovation tax credit. I share a lot of the comments on this side of the House with respect to this bill and with respect to the fact that our seniors have to have \$10,000 to be able to afford a renovation of the kind that they are looking for. If we look at how much these lifts cost, they're very expensive. Any modifications are very expensive. You have to have that money in the bank before you can actually do that.

Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, if you have the money in the bank to spend on a renovation of this nature, you're probably going to do it whether there's a tax credit or not because it's about improving the quality of life and sometimes even improving longevity of life. Folks who have the money to do that are going to do it, whether they have the tax credit or not.

I want to spend some time talking today about the beauty of this place, Mr. Speaker. We are, as I mentioned earlier today, 107 men and women who have the privilege and distinction of serving in this place. Out of 13 million Ontarians, 107 people. When I heard Speaker Peters actually say that—former Speaker Peters, I should say, Mr. Speaker—for the first time, that, I think, was the moment where it started to sink in for when I became a member of provincial Parliament.

This whole thing was a long journey, a journey that all of us had to make. We've all had different twists and turns. But it was at that moment, sitting in this place, this beautiful place, looking at the great features of this Legislature, looking at the eagle and the owl and all the sculptures and all the carvings of the wood in this place, that it really started to sink in that I was the member of provincial Parliament for Cambridge.

Before I came to this place, Mr. Speaker I was a university professor. I have a Ph.D. in political science, so I

had a long interest in studying parliamentary institutions. A lot of my favourite theorists are still at the back of my mind when I come to this place.

For example, A.V. Dicey was a man who was very well versed in our parliamentary institutions. He talked at length about the supremacy of Parliament, the supremacy of our parliamentary institutions. We are in a place that makes the laws on behalf of the citizens of the province of Ontario. We do that every day that we sit here, and we talk to constituents when we're not in this place. And so, thinking about that in the beauty of this building, that we are a supreme body making laws on behalf of Ontarians, really strikes me even further, Mr. Speaker.

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Blackstone talked also about the supremacy of this place. He suggested that our Legislature and parliamentary institutions right across the world have a capacity to do anything, and he cited the example: do anything except make "a woman a man, and a man a woman." That was his famous quote, and I think modern technology even allows us to do that, if we so permit.

That just speaks to the power of what we do in this Legislature, the power that we have as legislators, talking about laws and policies and regulations that govern citizens. It is a very important thing. We are very privileged to have a seat here to talk about those things that are important to our constituents and are important to the future of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, another one of those famous philosophers that I like to follow is a gentleman by the name of Edmund Burke. Edmund Burke had a famous speech at Bristol that he gave in 1776; 1776 was a long, long time ago, certainly a longer time—we weren't around at that time. Maybe the member from Durham was around back then, but I'm not really sure.

But, Mr. Speaker, he talked about the role of the MP—he was talking about British Parliament. He talked about that role as having a dual function: a function of representing constituents in your riding, and the other function being representing the interests of the whole, representing the interests of the entire country. He was talking about Britain, but we can extrapolate that. Not only are we, as MPPs, here in this Legislature representing our constituents, but we're also governing the whole of the province of Ontario, which makes my seat in this place even more special, given all that I have learned in my educational career.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I've been doing since I was elected as representing my constituents. I created—we have a resolution passed in this House that talks about holding the government accountable for their infrastructure announcements, particularly related to hospital expansions. I tabled a bill yesterday that is called the Protection of Child Care Centres Act. Hopefully, we can talk reasonably about moving that to second and third reading going forward. These are important aspects of what I have done in this House to represent my constituents, and I hope to continue to do that in my seat here.

Mr. Speaker, I have achieved a lot of success in my 32 years of age. I have a Ph.D. in political science, as I men-



tioned earlier. I achieved the highest academic honour. I ran a small business, and I even published my first book this year.

But, Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I'm most proud of is being a husband to my wife, Kate, and a father to my two boys. My oldest boy's name is Alex—Alexander. He's a bright kid. He just turned four in November, and he is already reading. He actually got to read his first book to his class last week. My youngest boy's name is Aiden. He is only seven months old, Mr. Speaker, and he—I just got a video from my wife this week—has started to commando crawl, which is a very big milestone in his life and something that, unfortunately, I had to see on video and not in person.

So, Mr. Speaker, that speaks to a lot of the sacrifice that members in this House have to make to actually be in this place. I think it's very important to understand that we do make a sacrifice to be here, but we are doing that because of the privilege that is awarded to us by our constituents, and that sacrifice in the name of public service, to talk about the future of the province of Ontario, is a very important thing that we should never lose sight of.

And despite all the partisanship we often see in this place—and we hear that a lot, that our politics has become too partisan—we should never lose sight of the fact that each one of us in this place has made a tremendous sacrifice to be here, and we should always be considerate of others who have made a similar sacrifice as well.

That sacrifice came to my parents as well. I want to give special mention to my parents, who immigrated to this country, like many Ontarians did, in the 1960s. Why did they immigrate to Ontario? They came here to give a better life to their kids and grandkids. You know, when I look my kids in the eye, when I see their faces, I want to be able to say that I gave to them and made a similar sacrifice to make sure their lives will be better, Mr. Speaker.

That's the reason why I decided to run to be MPP for Cambridge. I am so blessed to have the privilege to serve my constituents and be able to look my children in the eye and say that I have done everything that I possibly could in my life to make theirs better. We should never lose sight of that goal of making our children and our grandchildren have the future that we had—at least as good, if not better. We should be doing that on a daily basis and considering that as we go forward.

We all make a tremendous sacrifice. We all have ideas about how we can improve life for Ontario. I look forward to having those debates about the future because that is, in essence, what we do here.

Finally, I want to say thank you to the people of Cambridge and North Dumfries for giving me the opportunity to serve here. I'm proud to serve my great riding that is formed by the city of Cambridge and the township of North Dumfries. It's a great place to live, work and raise a family. I look forward to discussing ideas that will improve their lives in addition to improving the lives of all people in this great province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I have to say, I enjoyed the comments made by the member from Cambridge. I liked the tone by which he delivered his speech.

I want to say that there are a lot of Italian-Canadians that historically have been Liberals, of course—God bless. In the 1970s, we had quite a few Italian-Canadian MPPs, which was a change based on the politics of the 1970s. Many within the Italian community turned to New Democrats as a solution to many of the social and economic problems, particularly as it relates to workers' compensation, of course, welfare and pension-related issues. So we were able to draw a great deal of support.

Sadly, I have observed that there are many young Italian-Canadians that have gone to the Conservative Party, and I'm a bit alarmed by that. I'm hoping there will be a day when they will come back to the NDP and find a home with us, of course, a party that speaks to social and economic justice issues, and that connects to 99% of the population, by and large.

But speaking to the tone of the member from Cambridge that I liked, he talks about the humanity that speaks to the politics of the Conservative Party because they say—and we disagree with it—they're worried about people, and I like that part. That's the progressive part of the Conservative because, for so many years, the libertarian component of the Conservative Party has frightened me a little bit. So when I hear that human part of the Conservative Party, that progressive part makes you feel good. God bless.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to commend the member for Cambridge on his maiden speech and welcome him to the Legislature. I think that most of us—all of us—never lose that sense of awe when we walk into this beautiful building.

But I also do want to comment, Mr. Speaker, on the healthy homes renovation tax credit, because that is what we're talking about this morning. I want to put it in the context of a number of changes and initiatives that have to happen in our society if we're going to accommodate the number of people who are aging—and I among them—the number of baby boomers who are going to need to have options. I believe that this tax credit is about options.

The member from Trinity-Spadina, I think, spoke about only the wealthy. This isn't only about the wealthy. This is about people who need choices. I think of my own parents, 85 and 83. They're determined to stay in their home. They're going to need a bit of encouragement to spend the money that they're going to need to spend in order to be able to stay in their home that they've been in for 48 years, that has stairs, and they're going to need some support. That's what this kind of initiative is about.

1010

I think about Edna Beange, who is a member of the Don Valley West community; she lives in Leaside. She is



a former East York councillor. She has spent years working on initiatives with businesses to make them more senior-friendly, to make them more accessible to people who are living in the community and need to have access to businesses.

Along with our Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, along with the property tax and energy tax credits, along with the funding for long-term care and supportive housing—all of those things, all of those initiatives create the context within which this home renovation tax credit is being introduced because people need choices. There are going to be more and more people who need those choices.

We all need to make sure that we provide them, and that's what this is about.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's a great privilege actually to be able to stand and welcome my fellow member from Cambridge to the House. I know that it is a place that we all hold in high esteem, and we're all very proud to be here.

It was also really nice to be blessed with my first lecture from Dr. Leone today. I only hope that by the end of the session, I get a passing grade.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Maybe the Liberals will start to listen to him.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** So today I received a lecture from Dr. Leone, and I got an infomercial from the member from Peterborough earlier. You never know what you're going to find in this House, and that's part of the beauty of it: listening to all the other voices that we hear in here. I think listening is key.

I said earlier in my maiden speech that we don't really understand ourselves what we're saying if we don't listen first. So I think it's really key that, as the member from Cambridge brought up, it's an opportunity for us to listen to each other and have good, informed debate and listen to what each other has to say so that we can serve our communities as best we can.

In the short time I've known the member from Cambridge, I've known him to be very thoughtful and to put his best foot forward in helping his constituents. In the very short time we've been in this session, he has been a busy guy and, certainly, I've enjoyed watching him. I know I will enjoy working with the member over the next hopefully two and a half to four years—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Forever; for eternity.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** You just never know what you're going to end up with in this House, as I mentioned before.

I would like to thank the member from Cambridge for his great maiden speech on the fly and for all your hard work. I look forward to working with you over the next several years.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? The member from Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and may I say congratulations to you? I haven't said that yet. You look good there.

I want to congratulate the member from Cambridge on his maiden speech. I was totally blown away; I didn't know that he had a doctorate in political science. I have to admit that I was bit shocked: I thought you had to come from the left to get a doctorate in political science and teach in a Canadian university. But welcome, nonetheless.

Of course, sharing an Italian last name lets me speak about my ancestors who came over. Quite frankly, my father was an Italian-Canadian who was always an active volunteer for the New Democrats. In fact, at my dining room table at home, the English side of the family were the Conservatives, and the Italians were the New Democrats. We shared one thing in common, of course: We both didn't like Liberals. But those are the voices I grew up with.

It's also good, and I want to echo my friend from Trinity–Spadina in saying this, to hear that Progressive—progressive—Conservative voice, because that's the voice I grew up with. It was certainly not a libertarian voice; it was certainly not socially conservative. It was fiscally conservative, but it was socially progressive. That's something that it would be nice to see really reflected in conservatism generally in Canada, not just in Ontario. So I welcome that voice in this chamber as well.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I might get to like you guys.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Absolutely, absolutely—and to uphold, of course, as we all should do, this chamber itself, and just to say that it is of course an honour for all of us to serve. And, really, thank goodness we have various voices in this House, because I think we can all agree that we don't want a one-state solution in any of our jurisdictions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member from Cambridge, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member for Trinity–Spadina, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the member for Barrie and the member for Parkdale–High Park.

I have to say to the member for Parkdale–High Park: I wish I was at your dinner conversations, because I know it probably was highly contentious to have both sides, and certainly you're an outspoken member of this House. That would have been pretty entertaining to see.

The member for Durham actually came beside me today and said that I should read you the title of my book—and it might do members of that side of the House some good to read it. It's called *Approaching Public Administration: Core Debates and Emerging Issues*. It's co-edited by my good friend Frank Ohemeng from the University of Ottawa, and it's available from Emond Montgomery press. If you're really excited, I can sign



you a copy. Maybe we could do a book signing outside this chamber, Mr. Speaker, and we could go forward there.

I really want to thank all for the comments that I've received on that maiden speech. The member from Barrie actually let the cat out of the hat that I actually wrote that about five minutes before I had to say it, so I apologize if I made any mistakes. But I do want to say that I miss the lectures, so if I get to do that more often in this place and inform members on both sides of the House of some information that I might have stored inside myself, I'm willing to share that at any given moment, in as non-partisan a fashion as possible—when possible, I should say; certainly not totally there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Family is obviously a very important thing to me in my life. I know a lot of members in this place share that, and we should always respect and honour them as often as we can.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time for debate has come to an end. This House now stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to introduce the family of page Lila Kloppenburg to the House today. It's David and Marnie Kloppenburg, and son and former page Sam Kloppenburg. Welcome to the House today.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All the way from the city of Thunder Bay is Harold Wilson from the chamber of commerce of Thunder Bay. We welcome you back.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise today to welcome Joseph Rumi, who is the director of fine art at Rumi Galleries in my colleague's riding of Mississauga South. He's joined today by his wife, Laura MacDonald Rumi, and they're in the east members' gallery.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Today, I would like to introduce our dear friend James Moffat, who's a retired leader with the sheet metal workers and the building trades union. Jim continues to dedicate his life on behalf of Ontario's workers.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** I rise today to welcome Tina D'Agnillo, mother of the page captain today, Christian D'Agnillo, from Windsor. Welcome.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** It is my pleasure to welcome Sarbjit Deol, Mandeep Bhatti, Gurpreet Singh, Pawandeep Randhawa and Amandeep Singh. Mr. Deol is a prominent community activist who has made significant contributions to promote sports among youth.

They are seated in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** In the members' whatever-side gallery—I've been here for 21 years; I should know east from west—are both Victoria Hunt from OECA and

Craig Brockwell from OSSTF. I'm sure they're looking forward to 6 o'clock tonight.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Today, the kids from the high school up in Espanola are touring our wonderful working area. They're not in the room, but they are touring. They will be here this afternoon. I hope everybody welcomes them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** In the Speaker's gallery is my recently adopted younger brother. Joe Peters is here to visit us. Thank you, Joe.

I guess I should make sure that that's not an official record. He's not really an adopted brother, but might as well be.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Are you correcting your record, Speaker?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm challenged as the Chair. The short answer is, I am correcting my record in case my other brothers hear about this.

It is now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question for the Premier: Premier, 63 days after Ontario families told this government that they want to see action when it comes to our jobs crisis and our debt crisis, to actually reduce the size and cost of government, you have failed to bring forward one new idea to address either crisis. Let me ask you, Premier: Is there some big announcement you're making today about cutting spending, or are you just going to pack it all up for the Christmas holidays?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to receive the question. I was hoping that there would be a question of this variety today. I just want to review some of the things that we have done thus far, which I would have thought would have commended themselves to the Leader of the Opposition and his party.

First of all, Speaker, there is our healthy homes renovation tax credit. My honourable colleague wants to create jobs; this will do that. My honourable colleague, and his colleagues as well, I know, want to support seniors in their homes; this will do that. My honourable colleague is determined to help us better manage government costs; this will do that too.

So I'd ask my honourable colleague to lend his support to this very specific initiative.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Premier may have been hoping for a question of that variety, but I was not hoping for an answer of that variety, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, 63 days: Usually in their first 100 days, governments burst out of the gate, full of vinegar and vim, to take on the challenge of the day: the debt crisis—I was careful on that—the debt crisis, the spending crisis.

But what we've seen is a Dalton McGuinty government limping out of the gate: not one good idea to rein in runaway government spending. I don't know if you're tired, if you're out of gas, but surely a big announcement today—don't pack it all up for the Christmas holidays when you haven't addressed the urgent spending crisis in the province of Ontario.

Will you, this last day, at least agree to bring in a public sector wage freeze to save the taxpayers \$2 billion?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm always very appreciative of the characterizing of my honourable colleague's questions. But I think really it's important to focus on the specific initiatives. So, again, there's our healthy homes renovation tax credit.

Now I want to talk about our southwestern Ontario development fund. Again, my honourable colleague says he's interested in creating jobs, and this will do that. He's interested in strengthening the economy; this will do that as well. This will be largely modelled on the eastern Ontario economic development fund, which was very supportive of a—I think it was Deslaurier Cabinets in the city of Renfrew. It's very important to my honourable colleague opposite—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Town, town.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Town of Renfrew; I apologize.

Speaker, in the eastern Ontario development experience, I think we've created some 12,000 jobs. We've—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** —about 50 million tax dollars into close to half a billion private sector dollars. We want to do that in southwestern Ontario as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, that precisely makes my point. There is no question in which Dalton McGuinty doesn't say, "We're going to throw more money at it. We're going to throw more taxpayer dollars out there."

Premier, at the beginning of this session, you had to admit that the deficit number you put out there during the campaign was not an accurate number. The deficit went up to \$16 billion. It's already up this year, and all we hear from you is \$2.5 billion in more program spending.

Speaker, we are in a debt crisis in the province of Ontario—we're simply out of cash—and not one new idea from this tired, out-of-gas government to rein in runaway spending. Well, we do: a public sector wage freeze—\$2.5 billion in savings—to say to our public servants, "You don't get a pay increase next year when we're coping with significant challenges today."

If you're out of ideas to rein in spending, will you accept? Do the right thing and save taxpayers money.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Last day.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm just waiting with bated breath for one of the "spend" questions to come, so I look forward to receiving that.

Again, I say to my honourable colleague, we're moving ahead. We'd like to move ahead, Speaker, with the healthy homes renovation tax credit. It creates jobs, strengthens the economy and meets the needs of our seniors in their homes.

**1040**

We would like to move ahead with the southwestern Ontario development fund. I know there are a number of members in my honourable colleague's caucus who would be very, very supportive of some of the measures and the jobs and strengthening of the local economy that it would create.

But I'm convinced, Speaker, notwithstanding the tone of my honourable colleague's questions, that we are, in fact, on a lot of common ground, and we can find a way to move forward together.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier, Speaker: Premier, when it comes to reining in the size and cost of government, you're bereft of ideas. In fact, all you do is continue to ask us about spend questions, and all we get is spend answers from the Premier of the province of Ontario—\$2.5 billion. You're digging the hole even deeper, on top of an expanded deficit of \$16 billion. And then a scathing auditor's report—420 pages detailing Liberal waste, mismanagement and economic incompetence. When's it going to come to a stop?

Premier, I ask you, please tell us that this is not going to be a lame-duck session when it comes to reining in government spending. Put your big idea on the table today. If you won't, take ours: a public sector wage freeze. Let's get the hard work under way.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I want to remind my honourable colleague again of our two specific initiatives that are on the floor here today that I honestly believe ought to commend themselves to him in his determination to help us better manage our costs.

When it comes to our healthy homes renovation tax credit, we have found the money from within. When it comes to the southwestern Ontario economic development fund, we have found the money from within. They have proposed that we take the HST off of home heating costs; that's a \$350-million cost. We have no idea where they were going to find that money.

I think we should remove ourselves from the abstract to the concrete. We have some concrete initiatives, some practical, pragmatic proposals, and I would urge my honourable colleague to support those.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, I just don't think that the Premier gets it. Families are looking for change. They're looking for change to rein in runaway government spending and ideas to create good private sector jobs to get Ontario growing again. We brought forward both: a mandatory public sector wage freeze to save \$2 billion and modernizing our apprenticeship system to create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades. And all we got from



this tired government was a do-nothing session that didn't save one penny for taxpayers and didn't create jobs for apprentices across this province.

Premier, are you that much out of gas? Will there be big news today? Surely you're not closing down the session and packing up for Christmas with a lame-duck session of the Legislature to address the debt crisis in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we are always interested in the views held by the leader of the official opposition and his colleagues, and we work hard to reconcile competing views within that caucus.

For example, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has approached the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities asking him to give him some information about building a new university campus in that riding. Speaker, that is a very—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's a very legitimate request. I commend the member opposite for his commitment to post-secondary education as the foundation for new jobs and growing our economy. But would I ask the two seatmates to share this information, because it's hard, from one question to the next, to figure out where they're coming from on these things.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** We actually held out hope at the beginning of the session where he talked about how the Drummond report was going to be the silver bullet, that Don Drummond's report would be the silver bullet to rein in the size and the cost of government. But now we see in the throne speech and since nothing more than weasel words. They're backing away, Mr. Speaker, saying that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to ask the member to withdraw that one word.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Withdraw, Speaker.

Now we're seeing them back away. Now Drummond is going to discuss his findings and inform a debate and include other opinions. I think you're actually backing away from the Drummond report. You started out going in that direction, and now you're running the other way.

Not one new idea in the session—you're closing the doors down; a lame-duck session in the Legislature—to control the debt crisis in the province. We put our ideas out there. We will continue to fight, even if the session closes, for a mandatory wage freeze and modernizing the apprenticeship system. We're going to fight for families who send us to Queen's Park every day.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Order. Let's try to be balanced, please. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I want to acknowledge the viewpoint put forward by my honourable colleague. I cannot, of course, support his speculation about the due consideration we're going to be giving to the

Drummond report and any other advice that we're going to get.

But I want to lend some assurance to the backbench who find themselves connected to my honourable colleague that we will continue to give due consideration to their requests. I encourage them to keep those coming to our ministers on this side of the House. I want to let them know that, notwithstanding the fact that their leader wants to shut them down, we will do what is necessary to represent the public interest for all Ontarians in held ridings and in unheld ridings across the province.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, over the last three weeks, New Democrats have tried to work with the minority government and have tried to get results for people, but we're getting a sense that the Premier either isn't listening or just really doesn't get it.

Later today, I'm going to be moving a motion that puts the brakes on the Premier's corporate tax giveaways and focuses on better ways to create jobs in the province. The Premier says he wants to save some money. Will he back our plan?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We've had an opportunity to talk about this several times now, and I reminded my honourable colleague that, for example, in NDP Manitoba, they cut corporate taxes on seven separate and consecutive occasions. This is not a matter of ideology; it's a matter of doing what we need to do to strengthen our economy and ensure that we are competitive.

I remind my honourable colleague again that we cut taxes for families by some \$12 billion, and for our businesses, our job creators, by \$4.5 billion or \$5 billion, so we've tried to bring a thoughtful, balanced approach to this. At the same time, we've put in place benefits that help our families, whether those are different kinds of tax credits that benefit our seniors, the Ontario child benefit for needy families where there are children present, and our clean energy benefit as well. So we've tried to be very balanced and thoughtful in meeting the needs of our job creators and families alike.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, it's incumbent upon me to remind the Premier that, in fact, Manitoba stopped their corporate tax reductions in 2008 when the recession started hitting and went to a more targeted approach, exactly what we're suggesting.

In fact, it wasn't so long ago that this Premier himself insisted that corporate tax giveaways would not create jobs and would not bring investment. And if media reports are correct, there are members at his cabinet table who actually still believe that.

The Premier is telling Ontario families that there's no money left for their priorities. Why is he blowing hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate tax giveaways that even his own cabinet ministers disagree with?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** You know, Speaker, I came across something the other day which I thought was

rather interesting: Moody's Analytics has projected that Toronto's banks will have more employment in their financial services industry than London by 2017. We're at about the 300,000-job mark now in Ontario when it comes to our banks, and they're projecting that over the course of the next six years we will grow to some 375,000 jobs.

Speaker, we want to make sure, as we talk about businesses and corporate tax cuts in the abstract, that what we're really talking about is, what do we need to do to ensure that there are secure jobs for our families to support those moms and dads who can be hopeful about their future? That's fundamentally what informs our tax policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, after eight long years, the people of this province don't have jobs to go to today, never mind in 2017, and that's the Premier's responsibility.

In the throne speech, there was a promise made, and it was made by this government. They said that they were going to be working together and being open to different ideas in this minority Parliament. Now, if the Premier is arguing that there is a budget crisis and that it's going to hit families hard, then he should be keeping an open mind about his billion-dollar corporate tax schemes. When a family is told to keep an open mind about the cuts that they're going to have to face, why has the Premier closed his?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I say to the leader of the third party that I'm convinced that we have a lot of common ground and that we're going to continue to find ways forward together. For example, on our Accepting Schools legislation, I happen to believe there's a lot of common ground for all the members in this House.

Today my colleague will be introducing the family caregiver leave legislation. That would make Ontario the first province to provide a guaranteed eight weeks to care for an ailing relative. I think, Speaker, there is going to be a lot of common ground on that initiative as well.

So I will continue to keep an open mind on all the ideas put forward by my colleagues. I'm convinced there's a lot of common ground, and I know that at heart, we all want to grow this economy, we want to protect our schools, we want to protect our health care and we want to build a bright future for all Ontarians. I will continue to be informed by that.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier again. You know what? To make this minority government work, the Premier needs to keep an open mind. Earlier this session, a majority of members in this Legislature passed a bill that would take the HST off of home heating.

My question to the Premier is: Because it's the will of the majority of people in this Legislature, will he allow this bill to pass?

*Applause.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** This would be a spend question, and I notice that the official opposition are supportive of this. That is a \$350-million initiative, for which my honourable colleagues have yet to identify the source of the savings.

We have a different plan: It's our healthy homes renovation tax credit, which actually creates jobs. It stimulates the economy. It helps our seniors in their homes and it takes pressure off the health care budget. It seems to me that is the better way for us to move forward, and I would urge my honourable colleagues to support that measure instead of theirs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, the Premier is obviously not paying attention. We've talked about stopping the corporate tax cuts; in fact, we're bringing a motion this afternoon. That was part of my first question.

The Premier is talking about working together. He has a lot of words about that. But too often what people are seeing is the same old arrogant and out-of-touch government. Everyday people are feeling squeezed because it's tough economic times. Will the Premier and this Legislature finally decide to take the people and put them at the front of the priority list?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Well, Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing. I think, Speaker—I mean, what do Ontarians expect of us today? I think they expect us to find a way to move their agenda forward; I think they expect us to understand that we find ourselves in a trying economic period; I think they recognize that that challenge was not created within the province of Ontario. There is a global economic crisis that continues. They want us to find a way to protect their schools and their health care. They want us to find a way to invest in a stronger economy and in creating more jobs.

So, Speaker, we are doing more to protect our kids in their schools, we're doing more to create more jobs for Ontarians, and we're doing more to protect seniors and give them greater hope about staying in their homes longer. Those are exactly the kinds of things that Ontarians want us to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, Ontarians and Ontario families, they're all facing really tough times right now. I mean, saying that the economy is in bad shape doesn't really indicate that the Premier gets what it does to everyday families. We're one of two provinces that are seeing wages fall, and unemployment remains very high in Ontario. Meanwhile, the cost of everyday life continues to climb. We have the highest auto insurance rates in the entire country. We have the highest electricity rates in the entire country.

We really do need to start putting people first. I think this Legislature says it wants to do so. I don't know why



the Premier doesn't want to do so. When will the Premier accept that he doesn't have a monopoly on power and scrap his plans to leave everyday people falling behind while giving a break to those who need it the least?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we have a difference of opinion in terms of how we need to get there, but I'm convinced we have the same overriding objective. My honourable colleague makes a passionate plea for us to do more to help families in their homes. Well, I want to refer to two initiatives that address that very specific need and objective that I believe we share.

First of all, we are going to find a way to ensure that we reduce tuition by 30% for students who are going to our colleges and universities, which I think hits the mark insofar as we're both concerned.

As well, we want to help seniors in their homes. We've heard time and time again that, if at all possible, they would like to live out as much of their lives as possible in the safety and security and comfort of their own homes. But they want to make some changes to their homes, so our healthy homes renovation tax credit will help us do just that.

#### AGENCY SPENDING

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is to the Minister of Tourism and Culture. The Auditor General recently released a scathing report on the Trillium Foundation. In 2010-11, the foundation paid out \$111 million, which was supposed to go to support organizations that are essential to Ontario families and that enhance our quality of life. The auditor found that the provision of grants was not objective and often involved a conflict of interest where the person reviewing the grant application was linked to the organization that had applied for that same grant. Minister, this borders on another Collegiate type scandal. How can you have let this happen on your watch?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you for the question. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Auditor General for the important work he does. The Ontario Trillium Foundation is one of Canada's leading grant-making organizations. Each year, the foundation makes decisions on about 1,500 grants, with the help of over 300 volunteers from urban and small communities. These grants help thousands of small, medium and large non-profit organizations across Ontario.

The foundation's work helps build healthy, vibrant communities through investments that improve our environment and promote sports, culture and recreation. We have an action plan in place and we will continue to monitor the foundation's progress.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Speaker, we now know that the minister has read the website, because that's the opening of the website. But what about the scandal? What about the application for these funds that are going missing?

Minister, the auditor found that many of the most worthy projects were not provided funding. The auditor

found that at every stage, the process for provision of grants was less than adequate and that oversight was weak to non-existent.

As Ontario families struggle, I found it shocking to learn that an organization with one staff member received \$120,000 to develop its own strategic plan. Other organizations failed to show they produced any work, or failed to spend the grant money they were given or to use the money for its intended purposes. With many worthy organizations struggling to survive, why have you allowed this slush-fund mentality to develop?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** It's not only that I read the website; I'm also aware of what the opposite member has said in the past. Speaker, the member opposite has, time and time again, said great things about the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the work that they do to support important projects within his community and riding. Just recently, the member opposite was quoted as saying this about the foundation: "Once again, the Trillium Foundation has identified and helped to fund a project in our community which will have a major impact on the lives of some people."

Speaker, the member opposite clearly understands the great work of the foundation, but for political gain he's willing to throw them under the bus.

Since 2007, Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### SMART METERS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Yesterday, the environmental commissioner said that the Ontario Power Authority was still developing a system for measuring the impact of smart meters, so, "I can't report how much energy the time-of-use system is saving." That's disturbing, considering Ontario families are spending over \$2 billion on smart meters.

Minister, did you seriously launch a multi-billion-dollar program without any way to judge whether or not it works?

1100

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I'm delighted we have millions of technology units like smart meters in Ontario homes. It was on time and on budget, and for over three million people they're working. Just what are they doing? They're helping homeowners identify when to use energy and when not to, helping to match energy use with the cost of that energy and helping the local distribution units identify when lines are out and when they're not out. As we build on that system, we'll be able to further use the technology to help residents and businesses identify when they can save money and help redirect and direct our conservation efforts for the best possible use, an enormously strong platform that we can use for even better effect in the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Even years later, this minister can't tell us whether or not these meters are reducing en-

ergy consumption. That's what the Environmental Commissioner has told us.

At the same time you were installing smart meters, you cut the very programs that would have helped people reduce their home energy use—home retrofit programs. How are cash-strapped Ontarians supposed to save electricity if you spend all their money on measuring their use instead of helping them actually spend money to reduce their use?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It's actually the opposite: The time-of-use through the smart meters will actually help residents. We've already seen some evidence of that with Toronto Hydro. Already, it's going to help consumers and businesses save money on their bill. We can do an even better job in the future of giving them the information to assist them.

But one of the other things that the Environmental Commissioner said is that the conservation efforts already of homeowners and businesses have saved over \$1.7 billion from peaking capacity. That means we don't have to fund that type of generation. You know, the cheapest and the cleanest power that we have is the power we save. I join with the Environmental Commissioner. We can do even more on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Ontario's clean energy economy is employing thousands of people across the province. Jobs are being created. In fact, Windsor has several clean energy manufacturing facilities.

Despite the opposition's constant calls to destroy Ontario's clean energy sector, companies like CS Wind are succeeding. Earlier this week, I had the privilege to visit CS Wind along with the Premier. We met the employees who are receiving world-class training—proud employees, many of whom were not working this time last year. But employment in the clean energy economy goes beyond manufacturing. Many people in other sectors are benefiting from the investments in clean energy. These are not part-time, minimum-wage jobs.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Thanks to the member for Windsor West for standing up for good jobs. You know what? We've got SunEdison in Newmarket, KB Racking in Guelph and Mississauga, Ontario Solar in Windsor, Schletter in Windsor and Northland Power in Newmarket. They're employing: construction jobs, engineering jobs, operations and maintenance jobs and other manufacturing jobs—spinoffs, such as architects, software, legal, trucking, steel facilities, manufacturing, accounting, financial.

It's time you stand up for jobs. They're all over the province, Speaker.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

I noticed a class up in the gallery and I'm going to ask that we continue to use our inside voices.

Supplementary?

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased with the many jobs that are being created in our community and throughout this province in this sector.

Minister, this week, the opposition has been very critical of the temporary jobs created in our emerging economy. Many of these temporary jobs are construction jobs that are building the manufacturing plants—real jobs, important jobs. In fact, CS Wind has created 400 indirect jobs. This includes good construction jobs for my constituents. We're proud of these workers and their contribution to Ontario's clean energy economy.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister set the record straight and share the number of direct and indirect jobs that will be created in Ontario's clean energy economy?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** You know, Speaker, she's absolutely right. We're already at 20,000 jobs, direct and indirect, and we're on our way to 50,000, and you can see them all around the province.

But let's be very clear: When they talk about indirect jobs, they are talking about construction jobs. And who is involved in construction, Speaker? The trades, including journeypersons and apprentices. I thought they'd be interested in that. I thought they'd be interested in the carpenters, the labourers, the millwrights, the electricians, the pipefitters, the steamfitters and the ironworkers.

You know, a construction job feeds a family. A construction job supports a community. A construction job contributes to the economy of the province of Ontario. I love construction jobs, Speaker. They are great for the economy, great for families and they are a very strong part of the future—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

## HOSPITALS

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Premier, your government defeated a motion from former Burlington MPP Joyce Savoline in 2007. She asked for the expansion of Joseph Brant hospital to be made a capital priority and have funding released. Ten of those who voted the motion down sit across the aisle today. One, the honourable member from Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, said, "You don't just write a cheque for \$40 million without the plan being in place first. That, in fact, would be irresponsible."

Four years later, the province's share of cost is rumoured to be \$200 million. In the name of being responsible, will the Premier table a detailed plan showing costs, timeline for completion and how his government plans to pay for all the hospital projects he promised?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Infrastructure.



**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member for the question. The members opposite would know that the province has built 18 new hospitals; it's announced a number of additional hospitals over the last number of months. This is after that government closed 28 hospitals across the province.

This government created Infrastructure Ontario, which has a very unique way of procuring, paying and financing for hospitals. When they're in a competitive process they don't tell the whole world what their expected budget is. They have a process that generated, in all of their processes, \$750 million in savings across this province in infrastructure projects.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** We keep hearing about how all the relevant project details can be found online. But any details you find are fuzzy at best. The Premier's Building Together documents contain no mention of investment in Joe Brant—in fact, no hard timelines or costing for any hospital construction or expansion plans at all.

1110

The Auditor General's report, on the other hand, has plenty of juicy detail: gross mismanagement, glaring incompetence and wasteful spending. Will it take another brutal AG's report for the Premier to recognize a multi-billion-dollar train wreck concerning vital health care infrastructure?

Premier, when are you going to put your big-boy pants on and do what you said you were going to do?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The comment does not bring the best out in us. I would ask the member to withdraw that last part.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Withdraw.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I think we can do without the editorials. I'm asking all members to kind of bring it down—all of it. Thank you.

Member?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like the member to do her big-girl job as an MPP—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Someone has asked me to set the tone, and I've been trying to do that. I need some help from all of the members. This is not the time for us to exit the way we are. I was asked to bring decorum. It's not my responsibility; it's yours, and the shots back and forth are not helpful.

Member, you will withdraw.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I withdraw.

I would ask the member to speak to the managers and the people who are concerned with this issue at Joseph Brant hospital. They are extremely happy with the process. They have expressed that to this government, as most, if not every, single hospital CEO, manager, board of trustees and, most importantly, the public who are going to benefit from these hospitals. We are doing an exceptional job meeting the challenges of this province in

terms of hospital care, especially in ridings such as yours—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** This question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As the minister knows, she's responsible for working with municipalities to address our local challenges. As the minister also well knows, the province has a crucial responsibility in funding municipal transit. Can she tell us when she last met with the city of Toronto's Mayor Rob Ford to discuss ways to work together to avoid TTC fare hikes and service cuts?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I actually spent a fair bit of time working with Mayor Ford when I was Minister of Transportation. We had many conversations about the needs of the city. In fact, there's \$8.2 billion being invested by this government in building the Eglinton crosstown line. We're completing the air-rail link from Pearson to Union Station and we are expanding the Spadina subway into York region. So we've made more investment in transit in the city of Toronto than any government for a generation.

The reality is that the city of Toronto is going through a budget process of its own making at the moment. The city of Toronto created the situation in which it finds itself, and the city of Toronto is going to have to talk among itself and figure out how it's going to resolve its issues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** To the member opposite: As a Toronto resident, the minister must know that TTC buses and streetcars are already overcrowded. Waits are far too long and fares are too high.

The NDP has proposed a very simple solution: We'd like to reinstate the provincial funding of half the operating costs for transit in return for a fare freeze. The mayor, the TTC chair and city council have all called on the province to return to the 50-50 operating cost split. Why won't the minister adopt our solution or at least do something to prevent TTC hikes and service cuts?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You know, we have worked with the city of Toronto, and I don't want to give the member opposite the notion that we're not going to continue to work with the city of Toronto; of course we are. We will continue to work with the city of Toronto on any range of issues. We're going to continue to upload social service costs, as we're doing for municipalities across the province. It's another \$500 million that is going to be uploaded to the provincial purse.

Since 2003, ongoing assistance to the city of Toronto has increased by 600%. We have made investment after investment in the city of Toronto. More than half of the money in terms of the gas tax goes to the city of Toronto for transit operating and capital. So we are more than interested in making sure that the city of Toronto is self-sufficient and able to provide services to its citizens. But

at the same time, Mr. Speaker, the city of Toronto has to look at the revenue and the expense side of its balance sheet and make its own decisions.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Last week, the minister introduced legislation that would make the eastern Ontario development fund permanent. The legislation would also create the southwestern Ontario development fund. There is a great deal of support in my community for this program and lots of optimism, knowing that the eastern Ontario development fund would be permanent.

Well, the opposition can't seem to figure out what side of the issue they're on. I'm concerned about comments made by opposition members who are claiming that the two regional funds will be combined into one fund instead of separate and distinct funds.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the eastern Ontario development fund and the southwestern development fund will remain separate from each other? Minister, eastern Ontario wants to know the straight facts.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Yes, eastern Ontario needs to know the straight facts, and that's exactly what we're going to give them today. The answer is yes; these funds will be two separate funds—of course they will be two separate funds—and they'll be addressing unique needs in both eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario.

The eastern Ontario development fund has been hugely successful. It has created or retained over 11,700 jobs and leveraged almost \$485 million of investment.

The disunity and inconsistency of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, has been less than helpful. It's important that we all work together to put jobs ahead of politics. We're consulting with our partners in southwestern Ontario and we're consulting with the people of eastern Ontario to ensure that we put these funds together and create as many jobs as we can and have as big an impact as we can.

The fact, Mr. Speaker, is we live in a minority Parliament—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** —and we need the members opposite to support—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask that all members make sure that when I either say "Thank you" or stand up, we let the next question happen.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you, Minister. With that detailed response, I won't need a late show.

As I said, I think this is an important program, and I look forward to the discussions on how we can improve the eastern Ontario development fund. The minister touched upon this briefly, but I'd like him to elaborate further on whether the eastern Ontario development fund has met the objectives that it was intended to meet.

I'd also like clarification from him on when he expects to have the eastern Ontario development fund and the southwestern Ontario development fund up and running and helping to create jobs in these important regions. This is an important initiative, and people are eager to know when they can expect the programs to be up and running.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I know the member is very eager to see this program up and running, as is every member on this side of the House, and I suspect members on the other side of the House from southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario are also very eager to see this program running. That's why I'm looking to them to show leadership, to fight for jobs within their caucus, to fight for jobs in this place, to ensure we move this legislation forward as quickly as possible so that we can get these jobs in place.

1120

Our goal, Mr. Speaker, is to have these programs up and running by the spring, but we're going to need the members from eastern Ontario on the opposite side of this House, we're going to need the members from southwestern Ontario to work with us, to put jobs ahead of politics. That's what we're doing on this side of the House. We need the members on the other side of the House to stand up for jobs in Ontario.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation concerning the 407 extension. Minister, as you know, construction is in phase 1 of the Highway 407 extension from Brock Road in Pickering to only Harmony Road in Oshawa.

Work appears to be moving along, but a recent consultant's report now says that it will cost Oshawa \$31 million to make the necessary local road upgrades to accommodate the phase terminus at Harmony Road. This represents a substantial tax increase to the residents of Oshawa.

Minister, what will your government do to ensure that the costs of necessary improvements are not downloaded to the taxpayers of Oshawa?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the extension of the 407 east. This is an unbelievable project; it's the major transportation project that we have in the province at the present time. There was a tremendous amount of consultation that took place with all the elected officials at every level of government when this was moving forward.

Certainly, the issue that he is raising, I will look into. I'm not familiar with the report that he has indicated; I would have appreciated it had he provided a copy to me before he asked the question. But, in any case, the level of investment and the future economic development and job creation from the 407 east is just off the scale. I wish the member would stand up and appreciate that, and then ask his question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?



**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Minister, a quote from the report: "Based on engineering work to date, the city cannot afford to fund the road improvements required to address the 407 east extension impacts without significant hardship and the 'cannibalizing' of other ... city programs."

The only project that your ministry has agreed to fund is a temporary traffic light at the intersection of Harmony and Columbus Roads, valued at \$150,000. This is far from sufficient enough improvements to ensure that the supporting roads are safe for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Minister, when will your government commit to review the report and sit down with the city and the region to commit to find a method to minimize the tax impact on the people of Oshawa?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I want to remind the member, once again, that the impact on that whole area from the 407 east is going to be job creation—hundreds and thousands of job creations while the construction is going on. It's going to generate economic development in that area.

I want to repeat again: I wish the member would appreciate the level of investment—\$5 billion, plus or minus, depending on when the price comes in. That's unbelievable; it's off the scale. We're proud of that project, and we're not going to back down from any of that political, negative talk.

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. The performance-based contracts that the Ministry of Transportation created are a major departure from the way that northern Ontario highways used to be maintained. The lowered standards are not only leading to closures but they're putting motorists at risk. Why is this government compromising the safety of northerners by deliberately lowering the standards in its contracts?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Whoa, it's Bob's day.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, I have to say, in the last session as Minister of Infrastructure, I think I received two questions; this week, I think I've received 22 questions.

I appreciate the opportunity to answer. I also take the opportunity to say to the members here and anybody who's listening to this that we have one of the best transportation departments in North America, in terms of safety, in terms of maintenance, and it's improving week after week after week.

The investment is there, the commitment is there, and if you have any particular details you feel you want to share with me, then I'm happy to look at them, happy to meet with you, happy to arrange meetings with people in my department with you or with your critic, in order to move forward on this issue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Minister, northerners are very, very dependent on their roads and highways for their

everyday lives, whether it's taking their kids to school or taking their elderly parents to the hospital or to the doctor.

You know what? I'll give him a specific, Speaker: just the other day, three accidents in a span of a couple of days just outside Wawa. In two of these accidents, the roads were so icy that the paramedics, fire crews and OPP had problems walking to assist the people in the accidents, because they were worried about injuring themselves on the roads that were in such horrible shape.

Now, I'm going to ask this question one more time: Will you scrap your performance-based system and ensure that northerners can safely travel the highways and roads that are so essential to their everyday lives?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I appreciate the leader of the third party's interest in road safety and road maintenance. We certainly take it very, very seriously. That's why our winter maintenance standards are among the highest in North America. The member knows that the decision to close a provincial highway is the responsibility of the OPP.

With respect to the member to your right, he raised issues of highway closings. That's a decision of the OPP. The OPP work very, very closely with our officials. We're a team, and we do everything possible to ensure the safety of our roads, particularly in the north, where it's more severe than in the rest of the province. We will look into the issue that the member raises.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Speaker, wind and solar power are two very important parts of clean energy in Ontario. However, there is another form of clean, renewable energy that seldom gets attention in the province, and that's biomass. This form of clean energy is part of the feed-in tariff program and is contributing to the province's efforts to eliminate dirty, coal-fired generation. Biomass projects across the province are helping farmers participate in the clean energy economy and earn additional income.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Can you please give this House an update on biomass projects in the province?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I really appreciate the question on this issue from the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. Biomass is part of the feed-in tariff, so we encourage applications for this form of energy that's really used a lot in Europe. We're combining getting out of coal, which we want to do, with the use of biomass.

There's this community in northwestern Ontario that the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan is very, very fond of talking about all the time, and we are actually in the process of converting the coal-fired station to a biomass-fired station. It will give us the opportunity to continue to generate energy, generate power for the strength of the economy of the northwest, and sustain and assist the forestry industry, because we can use the biomass in a very good and productive way. It's an exciting project. Thanks for the question.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I'm happy to hear that biomass is contributing to Ontario's energy economy, a clean energy economy that has been threatened by the opposition.

Speaker, that's why I was surprised and amused to read in the Daily Observer the other day that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings are supporting the call from local forestry and logging companies to increase the amount of biomass in the province. I'm happy to see that they're now supporting our clean energy economy, despite their leader's constant calls to end it.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister tell this House what is being done to help forestry and logging companies participate in Ontario's clean energy economy?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** The member is quite right: The opposition does not support clean energy projects, particularly their leader, which is why it's so encouraging that the members from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Prince Edward–Hastings are joining their growing number of colleagues who are supporting green energy, like the member for Newmarket–Aurora, who, I think, was on the board of a company with FIT projects.

In terms of biomass in particular, Ontario has always practised sustainable forest management, and harvesting for heating, electricity generation or liquid biofuels is no exception at all.

This new sector will help revitalize the forestry sector, and it will create new, highly skilled jobs in the province. Let me assure you as well, Speaker, that the use of biofibre will not compromise Ontario's commitment to sustainable forest management.

This is an exciting development we saw with our wood supply competition—good news ahead; good jobs for everyone in the province of Ontario.

1130

## GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, the Electrical Safety Authority, another of your unelected, unaccountable and faceless government agencies, has a new regulation that you must now have a master's licence to operate an electrical business.

Three electrical contractors in my hometown of Perth—Jim Murphy, Les Cross and Gary Munro—have over 100 years of combined experience in the trade. But come January 1, 2012, your government has told them that they must surrender their business licence or face a \$50,000 fine each, and up to a year in prison. The reality is that these new regulations are forcing many contractors throughout the province out of business, and laying off their employees as well.

Premier, why won't you do the right thing and grandfather these new regulations so that you don't put hard-working men like Jim, Les and Gary out of work?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Consumer Services.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the member opposite that the transition period for electrical contractors ends on December 31, 2011.

In 2006, a regulation to license electrical contractors and master electricians was brought into effect to enhance worker safety and to increase public protection while ensuring that electrical work follows the Ontario electrical safety code, to improve consumer protection and to make the industry equitable and safe by allowing only registered electrical contractors to perform electrical work. Electrical contractors who could not immediately meet the requirements were issued provisional licences. They had time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Premier, it's not just complying with the new regulations and getting their master's licence, because here's the irony: There's also Bill Fisher Electric. He has his master's licence and has a perfect safety record with the ESA. Years ago, when Bill finished his apprenticeship and went to Kingston to write his test, he was given the wrong licence by the ministry staff. He was given a 309C, which is a rare domestic licence, instead of the 309A for construction maintenance, which he apprenticed as. Despite the fact that he passed the test and has six licences, including his master's licence, now the MTCU is putting him out of work as well, unless he fixes that mistake.

Premier, you have created such a maze of unworkable regulations that your cabinet doesn't even know which way to turn. Why are you trying to put every electrical contractor out of business in this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I cannot speak to that specific case, but I certainly can undertake to speak with the member about that specific case. But I will continue with what I was saying prior.

They have had five years. This actually gave the electrical contractors the time for them to meet the new standards. This included having a staff person who holds a master electrical licence.

The Electrical Safety Authority is making the effort to assist each and every one of them with obtaining a master electrician licence before the deadline by maintaining regular contact with electrical contractors to clarify the process and also to increase accessibility to the pre-master electrician course by introducing an online course in June 2011, by continuing to provide an adequate number—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Ear Falls is a small northern community of 1,100 residents, almost all of whom are dependent on the town's only doctor, who will be leaving on December 31. If a new doctor is not in



place soon, residents will be forced to drive either 140 or 280 kilometres to access urgent and primary medical care.

Ear Falls is doing everything they can to find a doctor or secure a locum, and other doctors nearby are trying to help, but the ministry will not return the town's calls or emails.

Minister, what is this government doing to ensure that the people of Ear Falls don't lose their only doctor, and why will the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care not return the clinic's calls or emails?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I thank the member opposite for raising this issue. Speaker, this government has put a very high priority on increasing the number of doctors working in this province. In fact, by 2013, we will have doubled the number of new doctors entering practice each and every year.

In addition, we've made a very high priority of increasing physician coverage in the north. In fact, we established a whole new school of medicine in the north, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. What we're finding, Speaker, is that what we had hoped would happen is happening: Doctors are coming to the school from the north and they are staying and practising in the north.

So we're working hard, Speaker. There are still communities where there is a physician shortage, and I will, in the supplementary, happily talk about the northern and rural recruitment and retention fund.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Mr. Speaker, I've only been in this Legislature for three weeks and this is the second time I've had to ask this government to ensure that my constituents have access to local medical care.

On Monday, I asked the minister about the Rainy River ER, which is on course to close in the new year because of the ever-present doctor shortage.

It's clear that residents of northern Ontario are not getting the help they need. It's clear that government policies are a barrier to medical care in northern Ontario and that this government is unwilling to work with the communities to find solutions.

When is this government going to get serious about the health care challenges facing northern Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I do want to say to the member opposite that I am more than happy to spend some time with her so that she understands that we can actually answer these questions informally between your office and mine, and we are more than happy to work with members on specific cases.

Speaker, on the issue in Rainy River that was raised earlier, I was very happy to tell the Legislature and update the member that we were able to find coverage through Christmas and are working on two more days in January that we still have not found coverage on, but we will work hard and continue to work hard.

Speaker, we have a very proud record in this House. Since we have been elected, we have never had an unplanned closure of an emergency department, in stark contrast to what was going on prior to our election.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** When I was in another field, in education, I used to ask my students and then my school, when I was a principal, what did you want? Do you want a number four, a number 10 or a number 15 when it comes to how high do you need me to get? What I've told them is, "You choose the number." Today, I gave you a number four. So if you want me to get even worse, I can.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** But I do want to end on a happier note, and that happier note is that I would hope that all of us would wish our pages happy journeys and merry Christmas. It is their last day.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I was also usually the first one to ask that they make them stay. I'm not going to do that because I think they have to go home for Christmas.

## SEASON'S GREETINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I also want to take a short moment to say to each and every one of you: Be safe, have a very merry Christmas, a happy holiday season, a prosperous new year. Take care of each other. I wish all of your families the best. I also want to say to the table and to all the staff here at Queen's Park, merry Christmas.

This House stands adjourned until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### WESTPORT LIONS CLUB

### ATHENS LIONS CLUB

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm proud to rise today to speak about two outstanding Lions clubs in my riding of Leeds–Grenville. It was my great honour recently to attend special celebrations for the 65th anniversary of the Westport Lions Club, and the following evening, the 50th anniversary of the Athens Lions Club. I have to say it was a privilege to be invited to take part in these events. It was a great opportunity to pay tribute to the current membership of these two outstanding organizations for carrying on the great tradition of supporting the community.

For the Lions in Westport, that service to the community began in the spring of 1946, and for the Athens club, their charter was issued in 1961. Both clubs were founded out of a desire by a small but dedicated group of citizens to work together on the common cause of making their communities a better place for everyone to live. Those charter members saw a need in their com-

munity, and with the attitude that's so much a characteristic of rural eastern Ontario, they stepped up and took on the challenge of doing something.

It's remarkable to see the hundreds of thousands of dollars raised for community projects and the lives changed and enriched by the work of the Westport and Athens Lions over a combined 115 years. Having spent some time with the current membership, I can tell you that the spirit that launched those clubs decades ago is alive and well today.

As the MPP for Leeds–Grenville, I congratulate the Athens and Westport Lions Clubs not only for your rich histories but for your very bright futures.

#### BELLEVUE HOUSE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I rise today to commend the efforts and the successful initiatives of the dedicated members of the Amherstburg Heritage Committee.

The historic Bellevue House, which dates back to 1816, was named as one of this country's top 10 endangered places by the Heritage Canada Foundation. It remains so to this day; however, the Friends of Bellevue, a small but passionate group of local residents, are determined to help restore Bellevue House to its former glory.

On Thursday, December 1, a new plaque was installed by Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada on the Bellevue property in Amherstburg. The plaque was a replacement for one stolen from the site over two years ago. Public access has been improved by placement of the new plaque in the public right-of-way in front of the property near a public bench, rather than at the previous site, at the top of the private driveway.

The plaque emphasizes the age of the building, the first significant estate built immediately following the war of 1812; its rare architectural features, unique to this region at the time of construction; and the fact that so many of those features have survived to our day.

With the bicentennial upon us, I urge the government to join with the Friends of Bellevue and work towards restoring this jewel in the crown of the province's historically significant buildings. It is a reminder of our debt to those who resettled here following that devastating war and our obligation to preserve and revive this outstanding property.

#### DAVE EVANS

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am pleased to rise in the House today and speak about the very prestigious award one of my constituents has received for public service. On November 28, firefighter Dave Evans received the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery. Mr. Evans received this medal for his selfless efforts on behalf of others.

On February 15, 2011, while off duty in a restaurant, he heard a fire alarm go off upstairs. Running to assist without protective gear or a breathing apparatus, he kicked down the door, overcame the intense heat and

thick black smoke and saved a 60-year-old woman trapped inside.

In the first moments of any crisis, many of us will reach out to emergency services. One of the many reasons that Ontario is such a great place to live is that we know that when we need this assistance, it will not only be there but it will be the best assistance we could hope for.

Mr. Evans is a tremendous example of this, and I am very proud to be able to say that he is one of my constituents in York South–Weston. On behalf of the province, I would like to personally thank him for the courage and bravery shown in the face of great danger. I know that all of those whose lives he has touched have benefited greatly from his heroic efforts.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Today I rise in this House to bring to light a serious issue in my riding. Over 1,000 families living in the Waterloo region, many of whom have signed petitions that I have tabled and will continue to table in this House, are concerned about the status of child care in their neighbourhoods. Waterloo region school boards are currently the only school boards in the province defying the wishes of parents and the official recommendation of the government by failing to implement a hybrid child-care model. They are forcing monopolized, expensive school-board-operated child care on parents in the region, implementing the changes with little to no consultation.

Part of this government's full-day kindergarten plan has always been before- and after-school child care, the extended-day option. Indeed, the official government position has been to continue to allow local third party daycare operators to provide within the program. This government claims that they believe the partnership between those good-quality providers and the school board should continue to be nurtured, and expressed this belief explicitly in a letter to the chair of the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board from the Premier and the other Ottawa-area Liberal MPPs.

I think the people in Waterloo region are wondering why there's such a discrepancy between the way the Premier is approaching this issue and the way the House leader spoke to the media.

Unfortunately, parents in my riding and the greater Waterloo region are gradually losing faith that the government will stand up to the school board and stand by their promises. I rise here today to draw attention to their concerns and hope that the Premier will stand up for families in Cambridge, North Dumfries and Waterloo region, as he did for families in his own riding.

#### ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Northerners are becoming increasingly frustrated because the MNR has been restricting access to lakes that people have been travelling to for generations. Between 1996 and 2008, public access has



been lost to 11,746 kilometres of forest access roads due to abandonment or restrictions. Many signs which restrict access have sprung up across northern Ontario.

In the north, access to our lakes and undisturbed areas is a way of life, whether it's for fishing or snowmobiling or simply picking berries in summer. We no longer have access to particular parts of northern crown lands. These restrictions will also have an impact on businesses such as snowmobile equipment retailers or fuel retailers. But the bigger issue here is that these northerners are now being told by the MNR, "Don't enter here, because this is off-limits to you." We all know that other, more privileged tourists still maintain access to these lands that belong to all of us.

The Public Lands Act, section 3, outlines that 25% or more of crown land that borders a lake must be reserved for public use. We fully recognize that environmental protection is important, but the government is not making the case for itself by allowing access to some but not others. It's high time we ended this two-class system of public access to Ontario's crown lands and lakes.

### AJAX STRIKERS

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I rise in the House today to congratulate the Ajax FC Strikers, who are part of the Ajax Soccer Club, who won the U18 national championship in Fredericton, New Brunswick, over Thanksgiving weekend this past October. Their hard work and determination came through as they won 3-2 over St. Hubert, Quebec, in the final gold medal game.

Team members include—these will take a moment to pronounce, Mr. Speaker—Niko Giantsopoulos, Benjamin Cowman, Alex Lodu, Ryan Boylan, Nicholas Axhorn, Kyle Crichton, Shawn-Claud Lawson, Keishon Alcindor, LeShaun Young, Peter Boylan, Jordan Dover, Nicholas Palmer, Joseph Raccasalva, Mark Eydelman, Bruce Cullen and William Lay.

The coaching staff includes Dario Gasparotto, Michael Stanley and Dwight Crichton.

As someone who has sponsored over 20 youth, women's, men's and children's teams for over 40 years, I was honoured to be a guest of Ajax council on the evening of November 28 to bring provincial greetings and honours to each and every player and the coaching staff.

The Ontario Youth Soccer League organized yet another great tournament, and I commend the Ajax Football Club on their magnificent sportsmanship and victory.

1310

### FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Speaker, the people of our nation must never forget those who fought for our freedom and safety. One of those very special units was the First Special Service Force, which was comprised of an elite group of men from all across Canada and the United States who courageously fought with distinction in World War II.

In fact, five men from Huntsville, Ontario, were members of this exceptional service group, and today I would like to pay tribute to these men. Let us not forget Syd Boyd, Harry Wilks, Charlie Rowe, Myrle Woolman and S.A. Burbidge. Their names are proudly inscribed on a plaque located at the Huntsville Legion.

The First Special Service Force was comprised of 1,800 men, half Canadian and half American, who were specially trained in rugged, difficult conditions. In December 1943, the force was deployed to Italy. After several battles with the enemy, soldiers of the First Special Service Force were the first Allied troops to liberate Rome on June 4, 1944, and assist in the liberation of France. It was due to the heroic efforts of the First Special Service Force that the Franco-Italian border was secured. The FSSF experienced fierce combat for 251 days and had been reduced to fewer than 500 men.

I've become aware, Mr. Speaker, that the Congress of the United States is considering a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the FSSF in recognition of its superior service during World War II. This award is considered the highest civilian award in the United States.

It is so important that we honour these men for their countless acts of valour. It is up to us to memorialize these brave men for all their extraordinary sacrifices in the service of their country.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. David Zimmer:** With the holiday season here, we want everyone to be safe in Ontario. Every day, Ontarians use our roads to take them safely where they need to go. I'm proud to say that our government has made road safety a priority, and today Ontario roads are among the safest in all of North America.

Here are just a few of the initiatives we've introduced with respect to safe driving. We've enacted tough penalties for drinking and driving, including prohibiting drivers under 21 from having any alcohol in their system while operating a vehicle.

As well, we've introduced a warning range of sanctions so that drivers with blood alcohol as low as 0.05 receive penalties, to further combat impaired driving.

We've also banned the use of hand-held electronic devices. Speed limiters have been made mandatory on most large trucks in Ontario.

These are some of the important steps we are taking to ensure that our roads are the safest in the country—the safest in the world. Safe driving is important, and today, Ontarians can use our roads and know they can get there safely.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and particularly a safe driving season.

### HIGHWAY BILLBOARDS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, with the recent completion of the four-lane Highway 11 bypass that sur-

rounds the villages of South River and Sundridge, the local businesses there have a requirement for highway billboards. The Ministry of Transportation's guidelines for signage along four-lane highways such as this one preclude any such billboards.

Now that traffic no longer moves directly through these communities, this billboard advertising is critical to local businesses, many of which are in the service sector and are reliant on visitor traffic and tourism dollars. They could benefit greatly from increased visibility and traffic from the new four-lane highway. In fact, for many, it could mean the difference between survival and closing the doors. Unfortunately, they cannot advertise.

I urge the Minister of Transportation to move swiftly to help these northern communities and businesses to capitalize on the advantages that beautiful four-lane highway can bring.

I also urge the minister to allow billboard signage along Highway 11 between North Bay and Huntsville, similar to the billboards currently existing on the four-lane highway between Toronto and London.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This morning I introduced a group of kids who were coming in from Espanola High School but who weren't here. They're here in the gallery with us right now, and they're from Algoma-Manitoulin.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member. It is actually not a point of order. We do welcome our visitors for being here—and we have the introductions set up so that we can avoid that in the future. But having said that, we're glad you're here. Thank you so much.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's tough to get your attention without a point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is. It is very tough. Or sometimes it's easy.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE ACT (EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT), 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CONGÉ FAMILIAL POUR LES AIDANTS NATURELS (MODIFICATION DES NORMES D'EMPLOI)

Mrs. Jeffrey moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave / *Projet de loi 30, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

Oh, I must have misheard. Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** In ministerial statements.

#### RED TAPE AND REGULATORY REVIEW ACT, 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA RÉVISION DES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES ET DES DISPOSITIONS RÉGLEMENTAIRES

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to establish political oversight over legislation and regulations to reduce red tape and unjustified regulatory burdens / *Projet de loi 31, Loi établissant un régime de surveillance politique des lois et règlements afin de réduire les formalités administratives et les fardeaux réglementaires injustifiés.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. From the explanatory note of the bill:

"This bill establishes a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly to be known as the Standing Committee on Red Tape and Regulatory Review.

"Every public bill must be referred to the committee for a review or include a provision stating that it applies despite the requirement for a review. The review deals with whether the bill imposes a regulatory burden on persons or bodies, other than the public sector, whether the bill infringes on the freedom of those persons or bodies to own and use property, whether the regulatory burden constitutes an unjustified burden and red tape, and whether the person or body that administers the bill is best suited to do so. The committee may amend a bill before reporting it back to the assembly.

"No person or body, including the Lieutenant Governor in Council, is allowed to make a regulation under an act without giving the committee at least 60 days notice to review the regulation and to propose amendments to it, except if the person or body gives notice to the committee that the urgency of the situation requires the making of an emergency regulation. An emergency regulation can remain in force for no longer than 90 days.

"The committee can also review acts after they have been enacted and regulations after they have been made and make a report back to the assembly."

Thank you.



## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** It's a pleasure to rise for the introduction of the Family Caregiver Leave Act.

But first, I'd like to acknowledge some guests from the caregiver community who are with us today: Jacquie Micallef and Cammy Kong of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario; Florentina Stancu-Soare of the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario division; and Mike Kronic of Bayshore Home Health. Welcome.

1320

Speaker, this proposed leave would amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, and would fill a need, giving working Ontarians time to spend with family members who are seriously sick or injured. This legislation is simply about compassion and the need we all have as family members to care for our loved ones.

Our bill fulfills a commitment we made prior to the election to provide a new kind of leave for family caregivers. It would allow working Ontarians the one thing they need most when it comes to caring for a sick or injured family member: time—time to be with our loved ones at a time when they need it most.

Speaker, all Ontarians share a variety of personal connections. We're either a son or a daughter. Many of us are mothers and fathers, and we have husbands, wives, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters. In short, we're part of a family. Unfortunately, families now and again encounter difficult times, like when a family member is seriously ill or injured. Maybe it's a child sent to hospital with a serious condition; perhaps a spouse who has been in a bad car accident; or an elderly parent has fallen and broken a hip. This bill would be for those family members at these critical times, family members who want and need us to be there to provide the care our loved ones require.

It's during these times of great duress that our focus is rightfully on our families. The last thing on our minds is the deadline that day, the email we've just received or the project at work. That's where this proposed bill would take some of the pressure off family members.

Those of you giving care don't need to worry that taking time off work will result in your losing your job. This bill will protect you as you support your loved ones. It says we care and it says we're going to help you to safeguard your means of making a living while you're caring for family members during tough times.

Our proposed legislation would provide up to eight weeks of unpaid job-protected leave to employees to care for seriously ill or injured family members. We will again ask our federal counterparts to take the steps necessary to extend employment insurance benefits to those taking family caregiver leave. This partnership with the federal government would capture the same spirit of compassion and commitment that exists now with our family medical leave.

The current family medical leave legislation provides job-protected leave for employees when a family member is facing a terminal illness. Today's proposed family caregiver leave is separate from the family medical leave. It applies to cases of illness or injury that are serious, but where there isn't imminent risk of death. However, if you're caring for a loved one under the family caregiver leave and their condition becomes terminal, you would also be entitled to the family medical leave.

Speaker, we know that Canada's population is aging and that more of our elderly parents and family members will be requiring care more than ever before. The family caregiver leave would alleviate pressures on Ontarians who act as caregivers for their aging parents and loved ones. It also means more people will have the option of being cared for at home, where they are most comfortable and where society's costs are lower.

Our proposed leave, Speaker, would be in the interests of all workplace parties. Employers and business owners have families of their own, and they understand how distressing and distracting it is when family members are ill or injured. Employers also know that a shared compassion during these difficult times is what builds employee loyalty and creates good relationships in the workplace.

This legislation is about families. It will help the new immigrant family and it will benefit single parents. It will certainly assist women who, as we all know, frequently take on a disproportionate share of the responsibility of caring for family members.

This legislation also says, quite simply, that we need to take care of our families, and family caregivers deserve to be cared for too. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. The member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. First, I want to say to the minister, thanks for providing the briefings to myself and my staff earlier this week on this bill, and I do look forward to working with the minister on this bill.

However, during those technical briefings with the minister's staff I did have a number of concerns that were raised in those briefings.

The first of my concerns is just the very limited consultations that the ministry has done on this bill. The ministry has not consulted with any of the small or medium-sized business associations or groups—and even on the caregiver side, it appears, very limited consultation on that side as well—and we do know that this legislation may have a significant impact on small and medium-sized businesses who have to replace workers during that time of providing care.

In addition, we see that the ministry has not been able to provide any evidence or any documentation that the system isn't working as it is right today. There's no evidence that anybody has been dismissed or been deprived of unpaid leave. So I want to find out a little bit about where this need is being driven from, because the Ministry of Labour doesn't have any evidence to the effect.



Also, it is clearly the minister's intention that this bill would move from an unpaid leave into a paid leave by having Canada Employment Insurance pay for that unpaid leave. Once again, Speaker, right at the present time, the way the bill is drafted, it doesn't provide for much in the line of safeguards whatsoever, and those safeguards will become more important with time if, indeed, Employment Insurance is included in the bill.

I believe that there must be some legislated parameters to ensure that doctors are giving clear criteria on what constitutes a serious medical illness or injury and that we don't turn a system that is working to some degree into a system that becomes more dysfunctional and, without those proper safeguards in place, moving it into employment insurance.

Myself and the PC caucus look forward to working with the minister, discussing and debating this bill to make sure that there are not any unintended consequences that have not been addressed and that proper safeguards are indeed put in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Responses? The member from Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to the content of this bill, and I do thank the minister and her staff for briefing me yesterday on some of the aspects of it. I believe it is based on the spirit of compassion, in tandem with the leave given to those who are deathly ill and to family members who want to provide that support. In that respect, I think our party is certainly supportive of the thrust of the bill.

I'm sure that many in this House have had friends or family members who have been ill or injured. I, myself, in 2005 had my brother Eddie, who was injured in a mountain biking accident and became a quadriplegic—C-7, T-1. It was a catastrophic injury—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Why don't you listen? You might learn something here.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes. I'm giving some good information here.

It was a catastrophic injury, Mr. Speaker, and it required our family to make sacrifices. My parents, who had just newly been retired, immediately picked up and went to Vancouver, where my brother Eddie sought immediate treatment at Vancouver General Hospital and then subsequent rehabilitation at GF Strong, where they provided wonderful care. To this day, he's doing well; he's productive. He also receives an incredible amount of support from British Columbia health care services in the sense that they have a wonderful home care program and home support. Long-term care is also quite extensive there too as well. So I think those are components of this that maybe we're missing the mark on.

We need to have a place for people to go. That eight-week buffer certainly will allow family members to find a spot for our elderly residents, elderly family members or even any family members who become sick; to find an area for long-term treatment and long-term care. But

those spaces aren't available, unfortunately. So I would ask the government to put priority on those bigger-ticket issues, those big items that we know are increasingly a problem in this province.

1330

The bill also speaks, obviously, to the Employment Standards Act and the protection of family members who are seeking care under this provision. You have problems already with the Employment Standards Act in terms of the enforcement of it. Just this week, or past week, in Windsor, the Workers' Action Centre sounded the alarm on wage theft. In this province, employers are not paying their employees what they're due. They're not even paying them their appropriate wage, and are sometimes garnishing their wages without any reasoning. That's illegal. But yet we don't have the ability or capability or even the wherewithal in this province to enforce those. So I would caution the minister to add on those provisions to enable us to actually safeguard those workers who take this up, should it become a measure of law.

I'm also a little bit hesitant in the fact that it doesn't add any financial assistance to those looking for an eight-week leave, who may have to have that burden placed solely on them. And relying on our federal partners to come to the table—I wouldn't put too much weight on their assistance at this point. I don't believe they are as compassionate as some of us may be in this House.

But all said, I think the thrust is good, the intention, as well. I appreciate the compassion aspect of it. One of the other cautions: I would say that it is incumbent upon a physician to determine whether a family member can participate in this program. I would ask that that provision not be a financial burden to anyone who is seeking this. In a lot of cases, to get a note from a doctor typically will cost \$40 or \$50—who knows? That shouldn't cost anyone anything. We should ensure that no one feels any financial burden when they're looking to be with their family members who have been injured or who have recently fallen ill.

But all in all, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the minister on this. I think it's a very small step but a progressive step, and I think it's something that can ultimately do some good.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their comments.

## PETITIONS

### SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituent, Robert Eugene Jackson, who is an electrician who has a small business in Orono. He's been in business for 20 years and he's just been served with a notice that he hasn't got his master's licence. So I have this petition here, which reads as follows:



"Whereas a new policy from the Electrical Safety Authority that mandates that all electrical contractors must have at least one licensed master electrician on their staff for every business effective December 31, 2011, is forcing" small contracting businesses "in Ontario out of business;" this is very important and troubling.

"Whereas this ESA policy severely impacts small electrical contracting businesses in Ontario. George, in my riding"—and this is from Jim McDonnell's riding, Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry—"who has been in the electrical trade for the past 51 years and a small business owner for the past 36 years, who has good standing with the Electrical Safety Authority, Ontario Hydro and local utilities, who follows the same rules and regulations as the ESA," follows the same electrical codes, "adheres to the same inspections and pays the same fees as large companies, will not be allowed to renew his electrical contractor licence. Effective December 31, 2011, George will no longer be licensed to practise in Ontario. George will be forced to close his small business," along with others.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Consumer Services to direct the Electrical Safety Authority of Ontario to modify the licensing requirements to allow small electrical contractors and self-employed electricians to work in the residential and rural market without the unnecessary burden of obtaining a master electrician licence or, at the very minimum, grandfather those who are currently qualified" and trained "and entitled to" do this "work in Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign this on behalf of my constituents and the many small business operators in Ontario. This is a tragedy, at this time of year, shutting people out of work.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas 700 affordable TCHC homes are in danger of being sold off to the private sector;

"Whereas the sell-off will reduce the diversity of neighbourhoods and lead to an increasingly divided Toronto;

"Whereas the sell-off will further reduce the inadequate supply of affordable housing for the 80,000 households already waiting for affordable housing;

"Whereas the sell-off will require the displacement of thousands of men, women and children from their homes, schools and communities;

"Whereas there are a range of other options to deal with the repair shortfall that exists, including drawing on Infrastructure Ontario loan funds, seeking support from higher levels of government, investing in retrofits to reduce utility costs, and partnering with non-profit and co-op housing providers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We urge the Minister of Housing not to approve the sale of the TCHC units, but instead to work with the city of Toronto and TCHC to explore more just, sustainable and economically viable ways to address the repair backlog in TCHC's scattered housing stock."

I couldn't agree more, and I'm going to give this to Mobarrat to be delivered to the table. I'm signing it, of course.

#### EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the community of Orléans will be hit hard with the movement of 10,000" federal" jobs from downtown Ottawa to Kanata;

"Whereas the move of employment away from the east end will force many residents to move to the Kanata area and property values that have already fallen about 5% will fall further;

"Whereas the eastern Ontario development fund is designed to help businesses create new jobs and invest in new technologies, equipment and skills training;

"Whereas another goal of the eastern Ontario development fund is to support economic development projects that will attract or retain investment in Ontario-based industries and communities; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has pledged to continue the EODF past its original four-year mandate;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the Legislature ensure that the eastern Ontario development fund extends to the geographic area including Orléans to assist job growth in the face of a federal decision to dramatically affect the sustainability of areas east of the downtown core of Ottawa, including Orléans."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature, Mr. Speaker.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, a petition to restore medical laboratory services in Elmvale:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

"Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians, including the people of Elmvale."

I agree with this petition.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

As I am in agreement with this, I have signed it and give it to page Carolyn.

1340

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. C'est bien apprécié.

I have this petition from the people of the northeast, actually; it's from all over northeastern Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients" under certain conditions; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine....";

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens" of northeastern Ontario.

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask page Christian to bring it to the Clerk.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of Port Elgin do not want the CAW to erect a turbine in their community; and

"Whereas the turbine will not adhere to the setback of 550 metres as determined in regulations through the Green Energy Act; and

"Whereas the community was misled that the turbine would be a generator of electricity for the Family Education Centre solely, not a profitable business enterprise; and

"Whereas there has been no third party health and environmental studies done on industrial wind turbines;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government revoke the CAW's permit to construct this wind turbine."

I support this petition and I ask page Prakriti to deliver it to the Clerk's table for me.

#### TAXATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Danica to bring it to the Clerk.

#### SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have this petition I'd like to read from the residents of my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a new policy from the Electrical Safety Authority that mandates that all electrical contractors must have at least one licensed ... electrician on staff for every business effective December 31, 2011, is forcing" electrical contractors and "small businesses in Ontario out of business;

"Whereas this ESA policy severely impacts small electrical contracting businesses in Ontario. George, in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, who has been in the electrical trade for the past 51 years and a small business owner for the past 36 years, who has good standing with the Electrical Safety Authority, Ontario Hydro and local utilities, who follows the same rules and regulations of the ESA," follows the electrical codes of Ontario, "adheres to the same inspections and pays the same fees as large companies, will not be allowed to renew his electrical contractor licence. Effective December 31, 2011, George will no longer be licensed to practise in Ontario. George will be forced to close his small business.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Consumer Services to direct the Electrical Safety Authority of Ontario to modify the licensing requirements to allow small electrical contractors and self-employed electricians to work in the residential and rural market without



the unnecessary burden of obtaining a master electrician licence or, at the very minimum, grandfather those who are currently qualified and entitled to work in Ontario.”

### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

As I am in favour of this, I have affixed my signature to give it to—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further petitions? The member for Simcoe–Grey.

### PENSION PLANS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A petition for Simcoe county paramedics:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas several paramedics in Simcoe county had their pensions affected when paramedic services were transferred to the county of Simcoe, as their pensions were not transferred with them from HOOPP,” the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan, “and OPTrust” pension plan “to OMERS,” the municipal pension plan, “meaning they will receive significantly reduced pensions because their transfer did not recognize their years of continuous service; and

“Whereas, when these paramedics started with their new employer, the county of Simcoe, their past pensionable years were not recognized because of existing pension legislation; and

“Whereas the government’s own Expert Commission on Pensions” in 2008 “recommended that government move swiftly to address this issue; and

“Whereas the government should recognize this issue as a technicality and not penalize hard-working paramedics;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Finance support Simcoe–Grey MPP Jim Wilson’s resolution that calls upon the government to address this issue immediately, and ensure that any legislation or regulation allows paramedics in Simcoe county and across Ontario who were affected by the divestment of paramedic services in the 1990s and

beyond, to transfer their pensions to OMERS” from the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan—I think it’s now called the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan—and the OPSEU Trust pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I support this petition and have affixed my signature to it, as well.

### TUITION

**Mr. Rob Leone:** This petition is on behalf of college and university students across the province of Ontario.

“Whereas tuition fees in Ontario have increased by up to 59% since 2006, and students in Ontario pay the highest fees in Canada; and

“Whereas Ontario students owe \$37,000 on average after graduation and collectively owe more than \$7 billion to the federal government and more than \$2 billion to the Ontario government; and

“Whereas tuition fees are the most significant barrier that prevents students from obtaining a post-secondary credential and disproportionately hinders access for students who are low-income, racialized, francophone, aboriginal, queer, transgender or have a disability; and

“Whereas tuition fee increases have enabled successive Ontario governments to remove funding from the post-secondary education sector, leaving Ontario dead last in per-student funding, \$15,000 lower per student than Alberta; and

"Whereas during the 2011 Ontario election, the government was elected in part based on a promise to reduce tuition fees by 30%; and

"Whereas all political parties in Ontario have publicly acknowledged that college and university tuition fees are too high;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario's call to drop tuition fees and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to apply the promised \$430 million in funding for grants to reduce tuition fees for all students and progressively reduce fees by 30% over four years, reduce the debt cap and introduce more student grants rather than loans for students, and increase per-student funding to the national average."

Mr. Speaker, this is printed on nice Liberal red paper. There are about 10,000 signatures from students right across the province of Ontario, and I'm prepared to deliver it to page Tara to deliver to the table.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time for petitions has now expired.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM SPENDING

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure should explore the feasibility of supporting the Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance project in Pickering.

Filed on November 23, 2011.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

1350

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** I am pleased to bring forward today this motion that's very important to me and to all the constituents in Pickering—Scarborough East.

Before getting started, I'd like to introduce and acknowledge some people who are visiting us today for this item. First, the deputy mayor of Pickering, Doug Dickerson; Pickering's chief administrative officer, Tony Prevedel; Pickering City Councillor David Pickles; and Nancy Gaffney, from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, are in the gallery. This project is a direct result of their hard work and commitment to Pickering's waterfront development.

Frenchman's Bay is located within the western sector of the region of Durham, on the north shore of Lake Ontario, in the city of Pickering. As one of the few naturally protected harbours along the Lake Ontario shoreline, the bay has provided commercial and recreational boaters a natural, calm water harbour for over a century and is currently home to a number of boating clubs and marinas.

On December 3, 2008, the city of Pickering, working in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, commenced the Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance class environmental assessment. The environmental study report was completed in September 2009. The Ministry of the Environment approved the report on November 16, 2009.

Going back in time, in 1874—

**Interjection:** Way back.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** —way back—the Pickering Harbour Co. built two breakwaters to protect the harbour entrance. Constructed of timber, the breakwaters have stone-filled cribs which are approximately 20 metres apart, with an average depth of 2.4 metres. Over time, the breakwaters have deteriorated, often overtopped when water levels rise above 74 metres. The channel width has narrowed from the original 25 metres as the crib walls continue to degenerate. The channel is dredged periodically to maintain a depth of 2.8 metres.

Currently—and this is of great concern—the Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance is identified as an "extreme hazard" on navigation charts. This is something that needs to change.

The Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance project will result in the creation of a safe harbour that supports the marine functions of the bay while preserving and enhancing the ecological conditions. The project will also provide opportunities to improve public use and recreation, environmental sustainability, enhanced tourism and commercial linkages.

Infrastructure investments are one of the keys to building a strong Canadian and provincial economy and improving our quality of life. Modern infrastructure supports commerce, creates jobs, attracts skilled workers and boosts a city's growth and competitiveness. The project will contribute to the health, vibrancy and diversity of the community.

Recreational boating makes a significant contribution to our economy and is a source of considerable tourist revenue. A 2006 study found that boating contributes \$26.8 billion to the national economy; \$6 billion was tourism-related. That equals 10% of Canada's total tourism dollars.

Frenchman's Bay is an important part of Pickering's heritage and adds significantly to the appeal of the community. The improvements associated with the harbour entrance project, as they relate to the expanded boating and tourism potential, will result in an improved economy for the city of Pickering. It's important to note that without implementing the harbour entrance project, the future of boating at Frenchman's Bay will indeed be uncertain.

Intensification of the city's urban centre and new developments of the Seaton and Duffins Heights communities will see another 70,000 residents and 50,000 new jobs in the next 20 years. The project will improve the city's waterfront assets and recreational opportunities, which influence residents to stay in Pickering and serve to attract new residents, particularly those with an interest in boating on Lake Ontario.



The harbour entrance project also respects the intent of the city of Pickering to create a focal point on the water for tourist activities at the foot of Liverpool Road with the proposed creation of a pier and associated public amenities. The harbour entrance project will result in an overall improvement to tourism operations.

Commercially, Frenchman's Bay harbour at the foot of Liverpool Road has undergone incredible revitalization. New restaurants, shops and walkways have been added, which have led to the development of a very vibrant, mixed-use public space.

Unfortunately, however, the businesses in close proximity to Frenchman's Bay are falling short of reaching their full potential to contribute to the local economy because of the state of the harbour entrance. Furthermore, the existing condition of the navigational channel has negatively impacted the ability of local marinas to fill boat slips. In the 1970s, the bay supported over 1,000 boats; today, there are only 300 boats using the bay for mooring. This shortfall equates to lost revenue for local marinas and, by extension, local business communities. Neighbouring harbours host up to 1,000 visiting boats per season, and the marina owners and operators estimate that 1,000 visiting boats can generate at least \$100,000 a season for local businesses.

The federal and provincial governments would provide community-building leadership and leverage the following investments by the public and private sectors:

- major investments in facility improvements, such as docks and land-based facilities, by marine operators and businesses;

- investment by the city of Pickering, the region of Durham and the TRCA in completion of waterfront parks and trails and aquatic and terrestrial habitats;

- expansion of the marine uses, which would generate an increased tax base for the city of Pickering, the region of Durham and the federal and provincial governments; and

- maintaining the benefits of current public-private investments to date in the revitalization initiatives of Frenchman's Bay; for example, the beautiful Millennium Square we have in Pickering and the new townhouse development associated with dockominiums—that's a new word for many of us; dockominiums instead of condominiums—from the Pickering Harbour Company.

Rouge Park's 10,000 acres will soon become Canada's first urban national park. With the Port Union Waterfront Park, funded by Waterfront Toronto, reaching Rouge Park by the fall of 2012, the waterfront trail will create a regional connection from the city of Toronto to Rouge National Park, to the city of Pickering and Frenchman's Bay, and across the Ajax waterfront to the town of Whitby border. That's a distance of nearly 18 kilometres.

This is about investing in sustainable communities, and the Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance project supports Pickering's official plan policy, which promotes boating, tourism and recreation within the Frenchman's Bay waterfront. The guiding vision for the entire waterfront node is that of a Great Lakes nautical village with a

mix of uses and an ambiance that is inviting. As Frenchman's Bay is considered a boating tourism area, the guidelines for the village are to create an interesting place to live, work and visit, recognizing the needs for seasonal marina facilities with opportunities for visiting boaters.

For project funding and implementation, the proposed funding partnerships of the project would involve the government of Canada, the province of Ontario and the city of Pickering. Based on the planning completed to date, including the preparation of detailed designs, the cost to construct a new harbour entrance is estimated at \$9 million in 2011 dollars. Once the total project funding of \$9 million is secured, the project implementation plan is expected to take 12 months.

This implementation schedule includes securing all necessary permits, tendering, and six to nine months of construction. The west breakwater would be constructed first, followed by the east breakwater. Should the funding for the project be phased over two years rather than one, the schedule could be revised to reflect a two-year construction plan. The construction of the west breakwater would be undertaken in the first year, with construction of the east breakwater in the second year. Based on the cost breakdown for completion of the harbour entrance project, the cost of a phased approach would be \$5 million in year one and \$4 million in year two.

I won't go into all of the details of what's involved with the project, but I'll just mention briefly—and this is quite technical, Speaker, if you'll bear with me—that the project proposes enclosing the existing east crib in a steel sheet pile, lined with sloped rip-rap and armour stone, to reduce wave reflection and wave overtopping. The western breakwater has an increased crest width to facilitate construction of a pile-supported concrete walkway. The natural stone breakwater ties into the passive waterfront recreation theme of Rotary Frenchman's Bay Park West and offers waterfront access for anglers, waterfront trail users and birdwatchers.

#### 1400

Both the eastern and western breakwaters will have a series of access steps with ladders spaced approximately 60 metres apart along the length of the breakwaters to allow emergency egress from the harbour channel entrance.

The design of the eastern breakwater also includes railings. The design of the railing is based on conventional breakwater walkway designs meant to resist the higher wave and ice forces that will occur near the offshore end of the breakwater.

The ends of the breakwaters will have a capped steel pile rail. The rail will reduce to an elevation of 77 metres over two metres long. The remainder of the walkway will have only a 200-millimetre-high pipe curb intended to act as a barrier for only small-wheeled, non-vehicular traffic such as strollers or wheelchairs.

With that, Speaker, I'll conclude my comments and will be happy to provide some closing comments at the end of the debate. Thank you.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Again, the opposition has reviewed this long-studied project. We have discussed it. Our critic, Frank Klees, normally would have been the point on this, but he has very graciously relinquished the time to Christine Elliott and myself because it is in Durham region and it is a destination that we understand and appreciate its asset value, both aesthetically and environmentally and, as part of it, the core of the important community of Pickering in the region of Durham.

In the very brief time we have, it's fair to say that this project is well studied—I think that's probably the best way to look at it—in terms of any research that I did on it. I want to start and sort of frame it in the context of a bit of history because when I was looking through the most recent study, which I think is a good place to start, it's important to recognize the contribution that has been made by the community, the region and other stakeholders.

Honestly, I'd have to start by saying that in 2007 the province of Ontario provided the city of Pickering with a grant of \$300,000 to complete an environmental assessment work plan and financing strategy to improve the harbour entrance. On May 20, 2008, the city of Pickering council authorized the TRCA to assume a leadership role in the partnership with the city of Pickering to undertake the work.

Wayne Arthurs, as the mayor of Pickering, a good member here, a friend of mine and certainly a friend and leader in the municipality and the region, worked very hard. I'm not trying to say that this was largesse or anything, but I'm sure he could demonstrate clearly the need for the investment at that time.

Tracy is the new member there. I commend you for being here and bringing this forward as your initiative as a private member. In that respect, these aren't political comments in any way. They're just a bit of framing the background here.

In fact, even more personally, the reason I'm kind of endeared to it is, I sailed on Lake Ontario for about 20 years. I had a Northern Quarter-Ton for a few years, which was really a fast boat, and then latterly I had a Viking 33, which was a very competitive boat, but they both drew about six feet. They would draw six feet, and that channel there: If it was rough water, buster, you're going further down to Oshawa or Newcastle or, if you're going the other way, to Toronto. These are decisions you have to make in a hurry, especially under sail, but more importantly, if you have a motor that fails in that channel, you're in trouble. But, once you got inside, it was a wonderful place to actually drop anchor or tie up and enjoy the time. So it is a destination on Lake Ontario, but this is a very treacherous harbour entrance. In fact, most of the navigation books that say things on it call it a high-risk harbour.

That's where I personally have stood. I think it should be completed. The work, the study, has all been done. In fact, if you look further back, that function is sort of man-

made. If I go back here—I saw something about it. It was about 1800—I'm just looking for it. Yes, it says, "Marine charts dating as far back as 1867 show an entrance to the bay in approximately the same location as the present one" today, "while a more detailed chart of 1913 depicts the entrance in its present location." There have been attempts over the years to provide some breakwaters for that entrance and exit, but again, in rough seas, you have to be—the boats drift, and there's so little clearance in terms of depth as well as width that it presents a challenge.

Now, when it gets down to it, this motion itself doesn't require or stipulate expenditure of money, although I know in the research that has been done that it's between \$7 million and \$8 million, as I understand it. Again, you're working with water, and the environmental conditions that are required are pretty stringent—as I said, \$300,000 to do the last report.

How often has this thing come up? Well, it has come up pretty well every year since about 1990—there has been a study of some kind, research done, the conservation authorities—and conditions aren't becoming easier any day now. I would suspect also that the member from Whitby–Oshawa, Christine Elliott, will add some content in a different frame. I put it in a personal reference. I think it's needed. I think it's a destination. The work has been done, the infrastructure, social and living conditions around the area—trails and things like that—are in place.

There is an investment here—the final investment, you would say. I guess this is where I wish some of the members, especially Tony and some of the others who are councillors—if Jim Bradley was here, for instance, he would say this is a "spend" question. Do you understand?

Everything we do in the province of Ontario is sharing the money with other destinations, and I say quite clearly that I believe Durham has been shortchanged. I'm not trying to politicize this at all. Forgive me for a moment for bringing some currency to the issue. We were promised—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm being fair and reasonable here. We have been promised three key pieces to our infrastructure. One was the 407. It was promised in three elections, they still haven't done it and now they're going to dump the charges onto Oshawa, Durham and Clarington.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** You gave away the 407.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** That's fine. Look, I'm talking about broken promises.

The next one is the new-build nuclear plant as well as—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Now listen up, please, respectfully—as well as the refurbishment. What has Premier McGuinty done with that? He has tossed it aside again, and the whole province of Ontario is depending on Durham to fire up this—

*Interjections.*



**Mr. John O'Toole:** Respectfully now. Respectfully, please. You don't like to hear the truth; I understand that. But I'm telling you the most recent information—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, I met recently with Roger Anderson and all the mayors from Durham region. They listed some priorities, and it's our responsibility, including Ms. MacCharles, to bring this to the attention of the House.

The ghost train to Bowmanville: Get it done now. The 407: Get it done now. Get the nuclear done now. Quit cheating Durham region. I'm tired of it.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Look, if Hazel McCallion was standing here, you'd be kissing her on the cheek or something because you'd do anything, but for us, we get nothing.

I have to share my time with Christine Elliott. They aren't listening.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Wow, Mr. Speaker. This has become livelier than I had anticipated. I appreciate the comments—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd be remiss not to recognize that today is the birthday of Ted McMeekin, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I remind the member: That's not a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just because I didn't learn my lesson the first time, on the second half of my first point of order I'd like to introduce the kids from Espanola High School who are here with us today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'll remind the member that it's not a point of order, but I'll allow it, since they've travelled this far to see the Legislature. Welcome.

Further debate?

1410

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I appreciate the ability to intervene into this session here. Thanks for the comments, to my colleague on the right, here—lively and, I think, poignant as well. In fact, we all have areas within our various ridings that need attention and need some infrastructure dollars flowing towards them. But thanks to the member from Pickering-Scarborough East for enlightening us as to the wonderful works that have been happening around in your area.

I took the liberty to Google search the bay, and it looks wonderful. It looks like a destination that I certainly would like to visit at some point, and I can see—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If you can afford a boat.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Well, that's the whole thing. The member mentioned that he'll take his 33-foot speedboat there at some point in his life. I'm wondering

how he affords the gas for that, especially given the HST that's on that.

Also, what I'm wondering is—the province as a whole has a massive infrastructure deficit, regardless of whether it is within the boundaries of our Great Lakes. I know that there are areas in my riding; specifically, Lighthouse Cove has had a dredging issue for quite some time. I would again add some commentary to the members who are in the gallery: Let's build this project, but make provisions for continuation of dredging. Don't just let them build it and leave; make sure that they continue to support you in terms of an ongoing dredging process. That's something that the members of the Lighthouse Cove community would certainly like to see from this province, something that I certainly will be bringing to the attention of the ministry and the government.

Also, the member suggests that this is a good project as a whole because it is an infrastructure project, and that means good jobs and building tangible products here in this province. I love infrastructure. In fact, I was a construction worker. Each day that I was on the job was a day that I was able to provide for my family. I built bridges and roads and sewers and water mains, and I was proud of it. It was a job that kept me working. Do you know why? Because to this point, they still cannot build a bridge in China and transport it here. I know they're working on it. I know they'd like to do that, and I know it's probably within the framework of some trade agreements, but it's because we're spending good, tangible money here, and we know that the multiplier effect actually helps.

In that light, Mr. Speaker, I would say, let's reward those employers that are actually building things here. Let's reward employers that are employing Ontarians in this province and creating jobs. Let's give them the tax break. The other ones, let's let them pay their due—maybe those corporations that have outsourced and downsized, that haven't created a job in a long, long time, the ones that maybe can afford a 33-foot schooner or a 43-foot schooner. Let's make sure that they pay their fair share so that if they can float down Lake Ontario and enjoy the scenery and enjoy the infrastructure that we're going to build with public dollars, they've made their commitments to those projects in a tangible way.

I think that's the overlying message that we've brought about. It's time for us all to realize how much we can contribute and what projects are worthwhile. Again, I certainly appreciate the need. I think it will add value to that community. I also think that in terms of the scope, it should be an interesting engineering scope as well. Some of those technical terms, I did understand: the rip-rap and, actually, the inclusion of the trail so that you can have people come up in the bike, I think is what it's going to look like.

I would be supportive of the general nature of this type of a project because there are communities across the province that need it. But let's make sure that we have the money in the coffers.

It's out there. It's right there; it's waiting for us to go and ask. We haven't asked them for a long time. I'll tell



you one person who's finally stepping up to the plate, or who has been for a long time: my good friend Warren Buffet. The second-richest guy on the planet has said, "Please stop pandering to me and my rich buddies. Tax me more so that I can contribute to the country"—so that I can help you with your Frenchman's Bay.

It's a powerful message. It's something that the province and the government should heed, something that would make your lives a lot easier, because we know that these projects are not going to stop coming to the forefront. There will be more, and they are needed. They're worthwhile, but let's make sure that we do it in a prudent, practical way. It's not too much to ask. It is a contribution to a cohesive society and a civil society.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to add my commentary to this subject. I certainly look forward to seeing it to completion and then, at some point, visiting the member's wonderful riding. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to the resolution of MPP Tracy MacCharles, the member from Scarborough East-Pickering, and her motion in reference to the Frenchman's Bay Pickering harbour entrance. It's good to see some members of council here, along with TRCA, including the CEO, and good to see Councillor Pickles arrive. I can tell you that between Mayor Dave Ryan and Deputy Mayor Doug Dickerson and all members of council—I'd be remiss if I didn't mention them: Bill McLean, Peter Rodrigues, Kevin Ashe, Jennifer O'Connell—they have all supported this project for a long, long time.

The Ministry of Infrastructure should explore the feasibility of supporting this harbour immediately. I can tell you, my family goes back within five kilometres of that harbour to 1841, when they arrived from Tipperary, Ireland. I can tell you, it's something that has been an ongoing conversation for close to 150, 175 years. It's something that is long overdue. I know that back in the days when my aunt and uncle Nell and Ted Hogan resided on Wharf Avenue, which is right there; it was just a beautiful spot.

Of course, the harbour did have problems. Back in 1874, the Pickering Harbour Company actually built two breakwaters. The original construction is maintained on occasion, but over time they certainly can deteriorate. Where the width used to be 25 metres, of course, with deterioration it's now down to about 20 metres. In fact, the new plan would see it grow to about 60 metres.

This motion for supporting Frenchman's Bay harbour is something that is long overdue. MPP MacCharles has done a good job bringing it forward.

I should mention that there are other excellent harbours in the area. As I look across the floor, there's a beautiful harbour in Whitby, and as you go down the lake, another beautiful one in Cobourg. However, there is greater potential in the city of Pickering for an even larger harbour with proper development, and—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** What about Ajax harbour?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Ajax has not made a decision to go with a harbour. We feature trails on the waterfront, but thank you for asking, and it's absolutely the most beautiful waterfront you've ever seen, from Metro to Kingston.

I would tell you that this project of Seaton and Duffin Heights, which is estimated to add some 75,000 people in the next 15 to 20 years—15 years if we get expediting things properly—but it has actually been working and on the books for 40 years. So it's like everything else: It's overdue, it has to happen, and it's time to go forward. We could certainly use the jobs in that area. We could certainly use the growth in development and tourism. It's just a natural fit.

I can tell you that our government has supported numerous projects in Durham. I would be remiss, unlike my good friend and colleague from Durham—there are many positive things that have evolved over time. I'm just going to take a moment and perhaps mention a few of them—stray a little off topic. There has been more funding going to Durham College than has ever gone in history. They just turned the sod a week ago for phase 3, which will add 900 students in culinary and hospitality. Ten days ago at the university, UOIT, we opened a new energy systems and nuclear science research department—long overdue. It was a joint venture with the federal government and the Ontario government, and it has just been a great project. Minister Flaherty was there. We have opened in Ajax a \$20-million operations centre, of which the province paid 70%. We have opened a restructured village in Pickering; it's the old Pickering village, now part of the town of Ajax. There's just been groundbreaking on the new Ajax Sportsplex expansion, the St. Francis de Sales centre for the arts and, of course, the Ajax-Pickering hospital, which just completed a \$100-million expansion and the new MRI. It just goes on and on and on.

1420

This is Pickering's bicentennial year, and this is a major project that would be most appropriate to come forward this year. I know it's even something my mother talked about many, many years ago. When you look at the harbour entrance—as a kid, I can remember that, although it was supposed to be on a slight angle, it was on a deteriorating angle, so when the boat came in, they really had a difficult time in navigating. It's a century or a century and a half overdue.

As I get down in time, I'd just, again, like to thank my friend and colleague MPP Tracy MacCharles and the good people from Pickering and the TRCA who have come in today. I'm now going to sit down because we have a younger, more agile, more attractive, more intelligent speaker coming on this particular project, and I'd like to leave her as much time as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am very pleased to stand and speak in support of the resolution that's been brought forward by the member from Pickering-Scarborough East, which of course is that, in the opinion of this



House, the Ministry of Infrastructure should explore the feasibility of supporting the Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance project in Pickering.

I would like to say that as a fellow member from Durham region, one of the fastest-growing areas in Canada, there is no question that the Ministry of Infrastructure should support this proposal.

As the member from Whitby—Oshawa, which I have to say has one of the loveliest waterfronts in the eastern corridor, I firmly believe that developing these lands in the Whitby area, certainly, has improved the quality of life for those people who live, work and play in my riding.

The Whitby waterfront boasts a fully functional marina, yacht club, walking and biking trails, a conservation area and so much more. Extensive consultations have also recently been held with the public, with the residents of Whitby, concerning future development.

Another area that has a beautiful waterfront, Cobourg, which is also nearby, has been dubbed the gem of Lake Ontario because of its waterfront redevelopment and revitalization that goes back to the 1980s. Cobourg reports that not only is their waterfront a great hub for community events it has also contributed significantly to their economy. For example, Cobourg reported that; on Canada Day weekend in 2006, the economic impact on the town was approximately \$1.3 million.

This certainly isn't just about beautification. The Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance project has the potential to benefit the city of Pickering economically quite substantially as well, as the members from Pickering council and city are here today to attest.

The Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance report, which was jointly commissioned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the city of Pickering, makes some compelling arguments about why this project should be a priority. The project brief estimates the cost of the project to be \$9 million. The city of Pickering has already committed \$3 million towards the total project cost and is proposing that the federal and provincial governments make similar contributions.

I'd like to just spend a few minutes on the specifics of the project, and this has been noted by several of the other speakers. Speaking about the breakwaters at the harbour entrance, they were built back in 1874. As the member from Pickering—Scarborough East noted, since then, they've deteriorated to the point where Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance is currently listed as an extreme hazard on navigation charts.

The report also indicates that because of this, the use of the bay for mooring purposes has dropped from 1,000 in the 1970s to just 300 today. It was noted that marina operators and owners have estimated that 1,000 visiting boats would generate at least \$100,000 a season in local business. So we're talking about some significant economic possibilities for the city of Pickering should this project be moved forward. This will help local businesses surrounding Frenchman's Bay, should it be completed, as it anticipates that their business will pick up where sales have been lagging quite considerably in recent years.

Another noteworthy point to discuss here is the plan for a waterfront trail. As you may know, Rouge Park is slated to be named Canada's first urban national park—and I know, Mr. Speaker, you'd be quite familiar with that as well. With the completion of the trail in Pickering, the Port Union Waterfront Park, the Rouge Park and the Ajax waterfront eastward to the town of Whitby's border, in terms of trails, will create a regional connection spanning nearly 18 kilometres. So this project has the potential to benefit not just the residents of Pickering—Scarborough East but the lakeshore east corridor as a whole, both economically and environmentally.

For all of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support the resolution that has been brought forward by the member from Pickering—Scarborough East. And as a former sailor in the area for many years, having sailed a C&C 30 for many years along both the north and south shores of Lake Ontario, I think it's a very worthwhile project and I support it completely. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** First of all, I just want to congratulate my colleague our critic on infrastructure and labour for those particular comments. I thought those were quite apropos in the sense of support, generally, for the project itself—but the talk about the larger issue, which is a lack of funding for infrastructure across this province, because what we see is municipality after municipality with the same problem.

There is a real need within the community in order to fix something that is of value to that community, and sometimes there's not the place to go and actually apply to get the dollars to do it. So clearly, I think what we all know as members is that we need to find some way—and maybe this minority Parliament is a good opportunity to do this; that we're able to find a way of developing infrastructure programs that give the communities more flexibility than they currently have now.

The unfortunate reality is that the model of infrastructure programs that we have today is driven by either senior level of government, federal or provincial—normally the province—and we dictate exactly what that money is going to go to. So it has to be for a road, or it has to be for water, and those are all good and important things, but there are projects that fall outside of that, and how do you fund them? That's essentially what the issue here is. We can all tell stories, all 107 of us in this Legislature, of projects in our ridings that have that kind of challenge when it comes to it.

I think one of the things that maybe we should be looking at is: Is there a way of developing some sort of long-term infrastructure funding so communities know, "I'm going to get X amount of dollars every year, and I can plan this year, over five years, or 10 years, whatever it is, to be able to achieve those things that are important to our community"?

And who best to make that decision but the community themselves, because each community is different. They showcase something different when it comes to



tourism or when it comes to economic development or to social living within their own communities, and everybody has their own sort of shtick, as we might say. Who better to be able to decide that but the community?

I was having a little bit of fun, because I was listening to Mr. Colle—and I forget the riding, so I would say it.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Eglinton–Lawrence. I'm sorry. He was talking about how he wanted to join the maritime caucus. I just want to say that there would be very few of us in this province in a maritime caucus, because the only place with salt water is actually in my riding and Sarah Campbell's, because we have the Hudson and the James Bay. Now, that's not to say that Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay and Lake Huron and Lake Superior and Lake Erie are not large bodies of water and are not considered maritime, but I thought that was a little bit amusing because there are specific challenges when it comes to those communities; for example, to be able to dredge a harbour in Peawanuck, to be able to get supplies in so that they can do the construction necessary and not have the huge transportation costs that we have flying everything in, which has become a problem. They have no money to be able to do that. The harbour has been silted for some time, and there's a huge problem trying to bring barges up the river from the Hudson Bay to be able to off-load. So as a result of that, it's adding a cost to the community. So, again, it's a First Nations community. It's a bit of a different funding mechanism, but still, there are unique challenges for them.

I just want to generally add my comment. I just want to essentially give my support for what I think is a local initiative, but I just want to put the caveat that in the end, the government has to make the decision to fund. The motion can't force the government to do that, but recommends for this House to get the government to do that. So, I get it. Let's hope that the government actually does listen and say, "You know what? The will of this House"—if it turns out that way—"is positive that in fact the government does that."

Now, I would be remiss in not saying one last thing in the last minute and a half that I've got, because this being a motion, it wouldn't go to a committee. So I guess you're not terribly disappointed that we haven't struck the committees yet, because I'm sure that if it was a bill, you'd be chomping at the bit to say to your government House leader, "How come you haven't negotiated with the opposition a settlement toward striking the committees in this House?"

1430

I just say it in passing, and I say it a little bit offhand and with a bit of humour, that it's unfortunate, because the government has not been able to find a way forward to be able to strike committees. There was a bit of hope last week that there was movement on both sides, that we could have been able to do something.

But those committees, I believe, are important to the functioning of Parliament. Committees are where everything happens. We draft bills; we bring them into second

reading. There are interesting debates here, but committee is where people are able to come and give their opinions as to those bills, one way or another, and where members of this House can then sit and look at how you make this bill work better and how you change it by way of amendment.

So, unfortunately—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** But this is a resolution.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, I know this is a resolution. What I'm saying is that it's unfortunate that we've not been able to strike it, because bills such as Mr. Mantha's HST bill—taking it off home heating—and the government's, if they wanted to finish the debate, on their home renovation tax credit would have been ideal bills to send to committee so that we could have actually done that work in the intersession, so that we could have passed those bills a lot quicker ahead.

I just wanted, for the record, to say that we New Democrats are looking forward to the striking of committees. We think there has been a lot of compromise on the side of the opposition. We're only now looking for the government to make that step as well, so that in the end we can do what's right for the people of Ontario who sent us here and can strike the committees so that, in fact, we can do the important work that needs to be done on behalf of all Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to rise in support of the resolution from the member from Pickering–Scarborough East.

You heard about the work that has been done in this area that goes back as far as 1874, but in fact, the history of this area actually begins in 1669. It's an extraordinary part of this province, and a place where there probably was safe harbour for maybe the odd pirate at one time or another.

I say welcome to the mayor, to the councillors and to the CAO. I want to say to them they've done an absolutely extraordinary job of identifying, through their five-year priority plan on Pickering's waterfront—and they went about it in exactly the way that you should go about it. In fact, what they did was, they identified the problems. You heard about the breakwater being deteriorated and that it needed replacement; that there was an issue of visibility during high-water levels; the channel is narrow, so it's not safe for navigation; there are sediment deposits which require ongoing maintenance dredging; changing currents; and of course, the waves, which create extraordinary hazardous conditions for the boaters; and there were the entrance issues that deter additional boaters from going in.

What they did was a very thorough analysis, and they actually looked at all of the options. They even looked at the option of doing absolutely nothing at all, but that wasn't an option that was going to be able to provide them with the necessities that they needed to be able to move forward under their priorities.

Their priorities were to develop a safe harbour entrance; to deal with the ecological conditions of French-



man's Bay; obviously, tourism and commercial linkages; public amenities; and the waterfront access trail. So, all of this combined. They looked at all of the options and they went out for public consultation. They in fact involved the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and it's nice to know that all levels of government participated in funding that study, including the province of Ontario.

So, through that environmental study, they actually had results. The results supported a new marine function that preserves the ecological condition, that enhances trails and access to trails and the public use for recreation and, of course, environmental sustainability. These were the main issues that they looked at, and they came forward with a solid business plan of how to move forward.

I'd like to speak just for a moment about the natural environment, this in particular for an area that is very sensitive. Preserving and enhancing the ecological conditions is one of the foremost reasons for their environmental scan and also is a significant part of their business case.

Maintaining the biodiversity of this area and enhancing that biodiversity, not only for this generation but for future generations, was pivotal in their planning, so they had to ensure that there was no net loss of aquatic habitat. They needed to protect the very sensitive terrestrial habitat as well as species of interest, of which they have many. They maintain a warm-water fishery within Frenchman's Bay, and this is critical to the biological system within the Great Lakes ecosystem.

They also had to prevent or minimize negative water-quality impacts and to preserve the very unique habitats and land forms, for example, the wetlands, the beaches and the dunes, all of which are a significant part of the biodiversity of the region and also play a very significant role in terms of their impact on the biological diversity of this province.

So indeed, they are to be commended. This was well done, well researched; there is a good, solid business plan. We, in fact, did invest this money for a good reason, and now it's to move forward to the next steps. We've heard a variety of opportunities of how we can move forward in terms of infrastructure.

I think, in particular, what the town of Pickering has also done is look at this in a couple of phases so that it's incremental planning. That's sound planning; that way they can also monitor and assess. As they're doing and maintaining that planning, it also will produce the type of income that will support the town in the interim. That's a very significant part of a good business plan. You don't just go at it, if you like, full force, but you plan it in such a way, that as you move forward, it in fact generates the kind of income that you need to continue to move forward from the town's perspective.

So I believe what the member has put forward is a sound business case. It's sound ecologically for this very environmentally sensitive part of this province. It certainly is good for maintaining high water quality, which, as you know, is an essential and pivotal part of the

platform of this province. Water, as they say, is the next oil, and so maintaining the quality of that water is essential, and maintaining the habitat for all of those, including us, who use that water, is also essential.

I would like to commend the member for bringing this forward and to commend the city for the work that they have done and the region conservation authority of Toronto. Combined, what they've put in front of this House is something that we can move forward with from all perspectives in the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Pickering-Scarborough East, you have two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** In closing, I'd like to thank everyone who participated in the debate on this very important motion. First, the member from Ajax-Pickering, I'd also especially like to thank him for acknowledging that it is Pickering's bicentennial year, so what a great way to celebrate Pickering if this moves forward.

Also, I want to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre for her well-researched and thought out—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** The member for Durham, the member from Whitby, the member from Essex and the member from Timmins-James Bay, thank you for the comments.

In closing, I want to congratulate the city of Pickering and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority on their excellent work to date. Well done.

If the required funding is secured from all three levels of government, there will be many direct and indirect benefits to the riding of Pickering-Scarborough East, Durham region and our province.

This is a unique and compelling shovel-ready project that will provide economic benefits, job creation, tourism and improved safety and environmental conditions. Frenchman's Bay is an important part of Pickering's heritage and adds significantly to the appeal of the community. The improvements associated with the harbour entrance will result in a strong economy and will contribute to Ontario's economic prosperity and the ability of residents and boaters, as we heard today, to continue to enjoy this beautiful harbour.

I look forward to supporting the next phase of this project and will be pleased to update the House as this project moves forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The vote on this particular motion will take place later today.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The motion reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should immediately move to implement:

(1) a moratorium on the current legislated corporate tax reductions so that the corporate tax rate reductions that are scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2012, and July 1, 2013, would not take place; and



(2) three separate, refundable corporate tax credits for: i. on-the-job training; ii. new hires; and iii. investment in plant and machinery.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Horwath has moved private member's notice of motion 4. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

1440

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to rise to begin to have a conversation in this chamber about the efficacy or the effect, the way that this government has dealt with corporate taxes. And I have to say that there's been quite a reversal of opinion from Mr. McGuinty—sorry, the Premier—and his team in terms of their view of the corporate tax rates in Ontario and how beneficial it is or is not to continue to reduce those taxes. In 2010's budget is when this change of heart took place. All of a sudden, in 2010, the Premier turned into a different person than he had been for so, so long.

I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about why I have believed for quite some time, and why I continue to believe, that reductions in corporate taxes are not the right way for Ontario to go. But before I do that, I wanted to just kind of set the stage by saying that this new-found desire for more and more corporate tax cuts in Ontario is something that is quite the opposite of what the Premier used to espouse. In fact, he used to criticize the Conservatives, when they were in office, for corporate tax reductions.

It's quite interesting when you go back in the record and read some of the things that Mr. McGuinty has said in this chamber about corporate tax cuts. It's actually quite funny when you read it, because about 70 times over the last number of years—70 times—the Premier stood in his place with such indignation, railing at the Conservatives about their reckless corporate tax cuts and about how ineffective those corporate tax cuts were and how they were the wrong thing to do. You know, it is funny.

There's a quote here from 2008, which is really just two years, Speaker—just two years—before this corporate tax cut regime was undertaken by the Liberals. This is what Mr. McGuinty said on March 20, 2008, and I'm quoting from Hansard: "What the Conservatives are asking us to do is to cut corporate income taxes—those are taxes on profitable corporations—by \$2.3 billion.... That definitely means closing hospitals, firing nurses, cutting education. It means driving up tuition fees. It means cutting the Ministry of the Environment and the like, and it means running a deficit."

Well, fast forward to today, Speaker, and what are the Liberals doing but every single one of those things? In fact, we are all waiting on the edge of our seats to see the kinds of things that Mr. Drummond is going to recommend that the Liberals cut, because we can't afford corporate tax cuts, and one of the things that they should cut is the corporate tax cuts. That's the thing that they should cut.

Why, Speaker, do New Democrats still believe that corporate tax cuts are the wrong direction for this province, particularly at this time? It's pretty simple. I mean, the big, big one is the fact that we're running a deficit, so the least thing that we can afford a corporate tax cut is when the government is running a huge deficit.

So they're going to have the people of the province suffer from cuts, they're going to have the people of the province continue to suffer from the impacts of the HST in terms of their ability to make ends meet, but profitable corporations, the big dudes in Ontario, are the ones that are going to get a break. It makes no sense whatsoever, Speaker. So here we are going down the path of corporate tax cuts during a time of deficit, which is absolutely the wrong thing to do and absolutely unaffordable.

But that's not all. We have a situation in Ontario where our corporate taxes are already extremely competitive. I mean, it's not like our corporate tax rates are somehow out of whack with the rest of the world; quite the contrary. Our corporate tax rates are in fact very, very competitive. They're lower than 50 states in the United States; they're lower than all of the Great Lakes states that surround us and are direct competitors to us. They are lower than so many jurisdictions, Speaker, that there is no reason, no reason whatsoever, to continue to drive corporate taxes down in the province of Ontario.

In 2011, a PricewaterhouseCoopers study said that Canada's corporate income tax rates are well below those of the US, below those of Australia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, among others.

Now, we have seen a recent OECD study that ranks Canada's combined corporate income tax rates 10 points below the United States and Japan—10 points below the US and Japan.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** How low can you go?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** "How low can you go?" is exactly the question I ask. The member for Trinity-Spadina is asking the question, "How low can you go?" Apparently, for the Liberals, you weren't supposed to go low at all, and now they can't get low enough when it comes to corporate taxes.

The reality is that the more we drive down corporate taxes, we're not getting anything for it. And so the third issue why this is the wrong direction, Speaker, is because we get nothing for corporate tax cuts. We don't get jobs and we don't get investment. Ontario continues to lag behind in terms of investment. This is a fact. I'm not making it up; it's reality. So why do you keep doing the same thing over and over again if it's not effective?

Corporate tax cuts are not tied to anything. You cut the corporate tax rate, and the corporation can do anything with that money. They could create jobs, but they don't have to create jobs. They could invest, but they don't have to. And they're not. They're not creating jobs and they're not investing, and they haven't since this government has found this new vision of corporate tax cuts in Ontario.



So not only can we not afford it—not only do we already have very, very competitive tax rates—but they don't do anything for us. They are not producing investment, and they are not producing any kind of jobs whatsoever. So I can't understand why this is something that the Liberals suddenly think is the important thing to do.

We know that there is a Globe and Mail study—there have been a number of different studies—showing that investment isn't happening. Do you know what's happening to the money, the dollars that are going to corporations? The one thing that is increasing in Ontario is the cash reserves of corporations. They're taking that money and shovelling it away, but we're not benefiting at all. Our economy is not benefiting and workers are not benefiting. Families are not benefiting.

There's another way of creating jobs, Speaker, and that's the other half of our motion. That's what I want to talk about a little bit right now. You have choices when you decide how you want to try to do things that create jobs. We know that corporate tax cuts don't work, but we know there are other vehicles that do work, and we've seen them work in other jurisdictions. So we're suggesting, instead of these across-the-board cuts that don't do anything except cost the treasury, that they have a more targeted approach, that we actually reward the companies that are creating jobs with tax credits. That makes a lot of sense.

We reward the companies that are training their workers by providing tax credits. We reward the companies that are actually investing in plants and machinery with a tax credit. That is the more sensible thing to do, because we are getting something for the revenue we forgo in the tax credit model. We're actually gaining something of value. We're gaining investment in jobs, we're gaining investment in plant and machinery, and we're gaining investment in training of workers.

It's not like this is all some kind of—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Pardon me?

*Interjection:* Fantasy.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —some kind of a fantasy. It's not like it's some kind of plan that we're making up on the back of an envelope. We have seen jurisdiction after jurisdiction in this country—jurisdictions, by the way, that are doing much, much better than Ontario, because let us not forget that Ontario has got the highest unemployment rate, the worst unemployment rate, a whole point higher than the rest of the country. So people are not getting jobs here. Other provinces are doing much better, Speaker. There are provinces which are doing much better that are actually implementing tax credit systems as opposed to across-the-board tax cuts. We think this is something that we should be doing here in Ontario, Speaker.

When you think about the billions of dollars this government is giving up in across-the-board tax cuts and realize that we're not getting anything for them, you have to try to figure out what the priorities of the Liberals are.

I mean, I cannot fathom why a government would come into power and make life worse for everyday families, day in and day out; take money out of families' pockets; really give up money that could be going to other endeavours of the government; tell families that government has to tighten its belt, and that's going to mean cuts to services; and tell families that, once again, they're the ones who are going to have to buck up and deal with the fact that life is getting tougher. Government is not prepared to do anything for them. In fact, instead of doing anything for them, they have to now shoulder the burden of the harmonized sales tax.

So the government itself, which has made life worse for families, is now telling families that they're going to have to get ready for the cuts that are coming down the pipe, and yet it refuses to even look at the corporate tax cuts as a way of softening the blow, as a way of acknowledging that—you know what?—for a change, families should be the ones getting a break. Instead, it's on the families' dime that the corporations are getting these across-the-board cuts.

1450

You know what, Speaker? We brought this issue up in question period last week. Do you know what the banks are making in profits these days, Speaker? I have it in my notes. I just have to find it. The biggest banks, the sector that is the recipient of Ontario's corporate tax cuts—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** They're getting all noisy across the way, Speaker. They don't want me to tell you the number, but I'm going to tell you the number.

The biggest banks, right? It's the biggest single sector that's a recipient of the Liberal largesse in terms of corporate tax cuts. They recently declared a quarterly profit—okay, quarterly profit, Speaker, so I'm only talking about three months—of over \$6 billion; \$6 billion.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They need a tax cut.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Boy, do they need a tax cut.

Now, Speaker, that is a new record. That is a new record for the banks in Ontario; a new record of \$6 billion in profits in a single quarter. Now, far be it from me to be over the top on this, but I would suggest that those banks don't need further tax reductions. They don't need to be having their taxes reduced on their profits.

And so I would suggest that the government actually look seriously at setting a pause on those corporate tax cuts. There are two more tax cuts to be implemented. One is coming next year; one is coming the following year—half a per cent next year, a full per cent the year following that. That's another \$600 million into the pockets of banks and other profitable corporations. Put the money in the pockets of people for a change.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this motion, and I think pretty soon my position will be clear by the comments that I will make.



But the thing I want to preface my comments here today with is the context in which we're having this debate today, the context in which this motion is being discussed, and that is of a very fragile economy. I think that we cannot think of ourselves in some sort of isolation, to think that somehow Ontario is in a bubble, that somehow Ontario is immune to the pressures that are being faced around the globe, that somehow Ontario has some sort of a mechanism by which economic growth and job creation will just take place without any outlay to the world outside.

We have to realize that we live in a global context. Since the great recession of 2008 and 2009 and the toll that it took on our economy—not only on our economy, but the Canadian economy and then globally—those effects are not gone, Speaker. What we're seeing is that countries in Europe are still very much in a fragile situation and that has a significant impact.

So we have to ensure that the hard-working people whom this motion is perhaps intended towards have good-paying jobs available to them, that those hard-working people are able to find jobs that are meaningful, that match their skill sets so that they can contribute more to our growing economy. That is why having a competitive tax infrastructure and a competitive tax rate is essential: so that we can attract companies that will prosper in Ontario and create good jobs. I mean, it's not a very complicated argument to make. It's as simple as that.

It is very easy to attack banks, to pick on banks because somehow the conception is out there that they're not contributing anything to the economy. But the reality is that when we're talking about banks, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of jobs right here in Ontario. These are people who are gainfully employed in order to ensure that they're part of a growing economy, and ensuring that we increase our corporate taxes to make Ontario an uncompetitive jurisdiction is not going to help these companies to stay in Ontario and maintain those jobs.

Here's the other notion that we have to remember: Given that we live in a globally connected and competitive economy, it is very easy, it is extremely easy, for a business to move from one jurisdiction to the other. It's something that can literally happen overnight, and we have to be cognizant of that. If we want to keep Ontario as a place to come and do business, if we want to make sure that we say to people, "Look, we've got a good, healthy society," that we have one of the best health care systems, that we have one of the best human resources based on skills, that we have a good education system, we need to make sure that there is also, along with it, a competitive business environment, and a tax structure that will ensure that these jobs are being created for all Ontarians. So I think the context, Speaker, is extremely important in that regard.

We've seen the effect. We've seen that in Ontario we have created more jobs; we have been able to recover the number of jobs that were lost in the recession because we

have that competitive tax jurisdiction. In fact, most recently, the Financial Times of London came out with a study where they demonstrated that in North America, Ontario is the second most attractive jurisdiction after California, that we are attracting a significant amount of foreign investment in our province that is resulting in creating good jobs—and taking that away by way of this motion, as has been suggested, is not going to help.

Now, I know the NDP likes to talk about Manitoba, and somehow Manitoba is a flag-bearer in this circumstance, but remember, Speaker, Manitoba has been reducing their corporate taxes as well. They, in fact, have gone from about 16.5% and have reduced their corporate taxes about seven times since then. So, you know, you can't—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** You can't just pick and choose examples that don't compare well.

Now, the other point, I think, is that we have to focus on small businesses, because we realize that small businesses are very much part and parcel of our economy. We need to ensure that we're reducing the tax burden on them, and we have done so by reducing the corporate tax rate on small businesses by eliminating the capital tax, or surtax, on small businesses, and also by reducing corporate tax on the manufacturing and processing sector in Ontario, because it's a very important, vital part of our economy.

So, Speaker, in my humble opinion, the motion that is being presented by the NDP, I think, is going to harm Ontario's economy in these tough economic times. It is not going to help in terms of creation of new jobs. I really urge all members to vote against this motion, because what we need to do at this moment is to ensure that Ontario is a good place to do business so businesses can create those jobs and help good, hard-working Ontarians to have meaningful, gainful employment in their skill sets. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion by the member for Hamilton Centre, the leader of the third party. It's an interesting motion, and I congratulate her for bringing it, because what it does is underline the principles of her party, the NDP. This is what she fought the election on, and I always admire somebody standing by their principles. Clearly, they are principles, however, that do highlight the differences between her party and mine. She wouldn't be expecting me to support this motion, and I will not disappoint her. But that's what happens when you have parties that stand by their principles, as we do in the PC caucus and as do you in the NDP caucus, as opposed to governing by wind chimes or focus groups, which other people do.

The NDP believes that by not allowing the continuous reduction of corporate taxes, there will be a surplus of money to reduce the deficit, fund more social programs, whatever it happens to be. The PC Party believes that the



word “company” and the word “profit” are both good words in the English language; they’re not dirty words. “Company” basically means a group of people, and the group of people who operate in a company are people who have either decided to work for that company and gain their employment that way, make their living that way, or the people who have invested in that company and want a reasonable return.

So you’ve got these two divergent opinions: We believe that the corporate tax rates in the province of Ontario at this point are, if anything, too high, and a barrier for the economy to recover in Ontario properly. And so business, to us, is a driver.

1500

People have called us at various times “the party of business.” We’re not the party of business; we’re the party of people, but we believe that people derive their incomes from good, healthy business in a good, healthy business climate, which the member from Ottawa Centre correctly identified as having been harmed by the state of the world economy, but which has been aggravated by the Liberal government of the province of Ontario. We have to address that, and we have to address that through an aggressive effort through our corporate citizens, and bringing taxes down is an essential part of that.

I want to draw attention to a couple of things. Ontario has one of the highest corporate tax rates in Canada: 4.5% at the lower rate—small business tax credit—and 12% at the higher rate. Only New Brunswick’s corporate tax rates are higher in the entire country of Canada. Prince Edward Island is at 1%; Newfoundland and Labrador at 4%; British Columbia at 2.5%; Northwest Territories at 4%. These are the rates that we have across Canada. Ontario is sitting at 4.5%.

Now, why do I single that out? Because there’s an NDP government in the province of Manitoba, Speaker—a successful NDP government, I might add—and it has a corporate tax rate of nil. It’s a zero corporate tax rate. So I have to ask the question: What is the difference between the NDP of Manitoba and the NDP of Ontario?

And Manitoba, at this point, is a very successful province. In the first quarter of this year, Manitoba had the lowest unemployment rate in the country for six straight months. We’ve had the highest unemployment rate in the country for five straight years. So there’s something amiss here if you take a look at NDP philosophy and the NDP approach to corporate taxes next door, to the west, and here, if we were to go ahead with the subject of the resolution by my friend from Hamilton Centre. Average unemployment rate in Manitoba for this year, 2011: 5.4%. The national average is 7.5%. And this is one of those months where we’ve notched down in Ontario: We’re at 7.9%. So this is the wrong time to be tinkering with corporate tax rates unless you’re talking about bringing them down.

So no—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I personally certainly can’t support the motion, but obviously I wish you well.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, I want to thank you for wishing us well and I love the wind chime comment. I thought that was a very good one.

I just want to say clearly, so that people understand what’s being proposed in this debate, that what we’re saying is that across-the-board tax cuts for the corporate sector don’t work. If you take a look at the experience of what happened in a lot of jurisdictions, such as the United States, if corporate tax cuts were such a winner, why the heck has that economy gone down the tubes? That is what George Bush did for the entire time of his presidency and it’s what the Tea Party Republicans continue to do in the Congress and the Senate of today. They’re continually trying to push down the corporate tax rates, and as a result of that, I would argue it has not been effective, because if you take a look at what’s happened to the American economy, it’s really gone bad.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, this is where I’m getting my point, and I’m beginning to wonder, what do George Bush and Dalton McGuinty have in common? They like corporate tax cuts. So I just think it’s kind of weird where the Premier is getting his lead from.

What Andrea Horwath and New Democrats are trying to suggest here is a more responsible approach. We say to the corporate sector out there, we have the lowest tax rates now when it comes to corporate tax rates in the area. We are the lowest when it comes to all of the Great Lakes. We’re completely competitive when it comes to the rest of North America and most of the nations that were raised by my leader, Andrea Horwath.

It’s good to do business here for a number of other reasons, not just because of corporate tax cuts. But what we’re saying is, if you’re prepared to invest, you want to do training, you want to build up your plant, you want to make those investments that will actually create wealth in province of Ontario, we will provide you with a tax credit. We think that’s a much more responsible approach, to say to those who actually do something with the money and want to invest in this province in order to pump the economy and to get it going, we will help those. But we’re certainly not going to give the money to those who are basically making lots of money and are really not giving anything back.

One of the points that was made earlier is what’s happening with the big banks. Six billion dollars in three months and we’re going to give them more tax cuts? Come on. How do you square that off with the hospital worker who’s losing their job this month at the Timmins and District Hospital because the government is saying we don’t have enough money to pay for health care in the city of Timmins? How do you square that off against people in this province that are every day struggling in order to make ends meet and they can’t get a cut on their home heating bill through an initiative put forward by my colleague Mr. Mantha from Algoma-Manitoulin?



What we're saying is using the Ontario tax code as a way of assisting to attract investment is not a bad idea. We're saying, yes, that's fine. But you need to make sure that you target those investments in such a way that we get back a bang for our buck. So I think that's the thing that needs to be said.

To the point that was made earlier in regards to Manitoba, Manitoba took an approach that we kind of started in this election. That is, if you're going to help one sector of the economy, it's really the small business sector. The small business sector is being whacked. Yes, we stood up in the last election and we said, as a modest proposal—because there's not a lot of money in the pot—we would reduce small business tax by 1%—

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Half.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —half a percent, I should say, down to 4%.

The Manitoba government, yes, has it down at zero, but New Democrats in Manitoba, as are New Democrats in Ontario, are saying it is important that we assist the small business sector because they're the ones that are creating most of the wealth. Those are the ones who invest in their communities; they're not taking their money and bringing it to the Cayman Islands. They spend it in Kapuskasing. They spend it in Nickel Belt. They spend it in downtown Toronto. And if we're going to help somebody, let's help the small business sector.

The problem with the corporate tax cuts: Who is it going to help? I look at my community. Xstrata, do you know where their head office is? It's nowhere in Ontario. It's nowhere in Canada. I look at Vale in Sudbury. Where's their head office? It's in Brazil. So we're assisting corporations who are taking the wealth out of this province and funnelling the profits offshore to no benefit to the people of Ontario.

So I stand proud with New Democrats and my leader, Andrea Horwath, in saying, yes, we need to have a vision that says you have to approach corporate tax cuts in a way that we get a bang back for our buck. We need to target that, and I think that is a very reasonable proposal.

If George Bush and Dalton McGuinty want to stay in the same bed, they're welcome to it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** It's my pleasure to be able to rise and have a discussion about this particular bill that's before us.

I'd like to start by suggesting that there is a difference in the philosophical perspectives of the different parties. We have determined that tax relief is part of our government's economic policy to stimulate the economy. Our priority is to create jobs and to grow that economy, and certainly we are about creating value, because without question, we're building our tax base.

As a good example of that, during the first 11 months of the year 2011, 45.8% of all new Canadian jobs were created in Ontario. And, yes, there is an unemployment issue. It's as high as—I've written it down—13.2% in Newfoundland and 11.1% in PEI. Certainly, we are at 7.9%. It goes down to 5% in Alberta. There's no question

that, right across this country, all of our provinces are dealing with issues that are a result of the recession of 2008.

So what is it, in fact, that we have done? What difference does our tax relief make? Let's just have a little chat about that. In order to stimulate the economy, we do have the tax relief. Our unemployment rate in 2009 was 9.4%. And you're right: It's now at 7.6%. There is more to be done—no question. But since May 2009, we have 283,400 new net jobs. We recovered all jobs lost in that recession, and overall, since 2003, we have 502,000 new net jobs. And so I think Canadian jobs that were created in Ontario are here, hopefully, to stay. But also, if they're not, our priority is still to continue to create those jobs through the type of tax relief that we have the opportunity to do.

We understand how difficult it is when one loses their job, and so we're going to do everything we possibly can to encourage the investment to create more.

Certainly, our auto sector is number one. We have a new assembly plant in Woodstock, and our machinery and equipment investments have grown by 6.2% in the second quarter.

If you actually look at what happened in Canada, our exports on machinery and industry are \$70 billion. That actually does not include the cost of weight, carriage and freightage. When it's imported and it comes in from the United States, it carries those numbers, so it's slightly higher, at \$90 billion, in terms of imports, but obviously we still have a very good, strong sector in Canada dealing with machinery.

So what possible difference does that make here? In fact, our machinery in manufacturing—89% will pay less in terms of tax; software publishers will pay 58% less in tax; restaurants will pay 67% less.

**1510**

I want to speak to you for a few minutes about this extraordinary small business. It's called Blue Mountain Plastics. That's the name of Ice River Springs' recycling facility. It's not 1,000 jobs; it's 35 jobs. It's a small business in Shelburne—absolutely phenomenal. They take those old bottles and they recycle them. They have recycled one trillion bottles into new bottles by taking just the number 1s. It's a subsidiary. It works here in Ontario. It manufactures here in Ontario, and it can actually take all of the recycling processes right through the Great Lakes and all of Ontario as well. They can handle 80% of the blue box material that's collected in Ontario annually.

The best part is, this is a really good business that started with a company called Amut from Italy. So it's a combined effort using Italian investment, United States investment and Canadian know-how by putting this together and putting something that now goes into President's Choice, into Walmart; it will go into Shoppers Drug Mart—a significant number of suppliers of bottled water.

All of us know that we've got to keep those things out of our landfills. The last thing we want to do is to burn them, because of the particulates they put into the air, or



maybe they can actually put them into cement. What we need to do is recycle.

This is a really good example of how a small business, because of the good tax incentives that are here in Ontario, came to set up that manufacturing company in Ontario. Yes, there are 35 jobs today. They're working 24/7, and they're looking at how they can expand. Their biggest challenge is, they need more and more of those bottles. The best part is, they reduced their energy footprint. It is the best story for energy recycling, because they deal within a range that certainly reduces their carbon imprint, bringing in that product for them to be able to—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Where is that company?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** That company is Blue Mountain, in Shelburne. As I said, it has converted over one trillion bottles.

So I think what we've been able to do is to share with you that, yes, tax relief does work and that we will continue to work with our large corporations, but the heart and soul of this province is in small and medium corporations. We've got to continue to find ways and means to create those jobs, to ensure that they continue to exist and to provide the kind of tax relief that allows them to continue to hire more people. That's really what this is all about.

I want to say something, though. I want to say thank you to the members of the third party for your support yesterday on the throne speech—I just want to say thank you. And then I'd like to take one last minute, because I may not get to speak again, and say Merry Christmas, everyone.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me this afternoon. I'm pleased to rise to speak on behalf of our PC caucus, the residents of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and the many small and medium-sized businesses who would be impacted by this motion.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I come from a small business background, a small family business in the village of Newbury in southwestern Ontario, and we proudly employ over 65 people in our Home Hardware Building Centre store, auto parts store and our Rogers store. So I'm speaking today on behalf of small and medium-sized businesses.

This motion will place a moratorium on the current legislated corporate tax reductions that are scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2012, and again on July 1, 2013, and that is something that I strongly oppose.

You see, Mr. Speaker, businesses across Ontario, small and medium-sized businesses, are counting on these tax reductions. They've already been passed into law, and responsible corporations are now planning and counting on these reductions to continue to get the Ontario economy back on its feet.

Ontario currently has some of the highest corporate tax rates, second only to the province of New Brunswick. That's right, Mr. Speaker: second-highest in all of Con-

federation. Manitoba, as we've heard, under an NDP government, has supported their businesses and held their lower corporate tax rate at nil. PEI comes in at 1%, British Columbia at 2.5%, Alberta holds true at 3%, our friends out in Newfoundland and Labrador come in at 4%, and so do the territories, and, of course, Ontario, as I mentioned, is second worst at 4.5%.

This motion would have a drastic impact on our small and medium-sized businesses, the very heart of our economy. Indeed, over 90% of all new jobs come from small businesses, the very businesses who will benefit most from this fair, transparent and necessary reduction in corporate taxes. You see, Mr. Speaker, I believe in being fair, open and transparent—that's how I was raised, and that's how we do business—and these across-the-board, broad-based corporate tax cuts are much better than picking and choosing certain items and applying tax credits here and there.

The Ontario PC Party has always been committed to ensuring that businesses are able to compete and are able to help grow our economy. We need to create more jobs and create the conditions in which businesses in Ontario can thrive and prosper.

I will not be part of telling small independent and private businesses where they should invest to win the favour of our government. Instead, I will be standing up for our small and medium-sized businesses, standing up for broad-based corporate tax reductions and opposing this motion, and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I want to thank our leader, Andrea Horwath, for bringing forward this motion today, because despite low corporate tax rates and besides corporate tax cuts, those tax cuts have not helped Welland, they have not helped Hamilton, and they have not helped St. Catharine's, and over the—well, just since 2008, we've lost thousands of jobs in my riding. The new jobs that have been created that we've been hearing about here today are not jobs that pay \$30 and \$35 an hour. They're not jobs that support families. They're not jobs that put kids through university.

The banks—we heard about the banks' \$6-billion profit. Banks are paying a buck an hour more than minimum wage to most of their front-line workers. Those are the kinds of jobs that the \$6 billion is supporting.

In my community, John Deere closed its doors after 100 years in 2010—800 factory jobs gone; 800 employees out of work; another 300 office workers in that factory. That business was in our community for 100 years. It made tons of profit. In addition to corporate tax breaks, it also got infrastructure investment to the tune of millions and millions of dollars, but it turned its back on our community, on our workers, and it took all those jobs to China, where it could make some more profit.

Henniges, which has been under the name of probably six different companies over the last 50 years, just closed its doors. I was at a barbecue in September, and I think that at the end of the day, there were 300 jobs lost, but at



its peak, not that long ago, maybe 2007 or 2008, it employed 1,500 workers in our community. Some husbands and wives both worked at that factory, and now both of them are out of work.

What I'm hearing in my community is, as these people run out of EI benefits, they're having to sell their houses, because there are no jobs—there are no jobs in the province of Ontario other than low-paid jobs—to support families in our community. So people in our community are either having to remortgage their homes or they're having to sell their homes so that they can actually live off of those while they wait for a job to come their way.

Bick's Pickles in Dunnville shut down; 300 jobs. CanGro in Exeter closed at the same time; 150 employees at CanGro near St. David's in Welland. We tried to save that factory, but we couldn't, so another 150 employees out of work.

So I think that this plan—

**Interjection:** Atlas Steel.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Atlas Steel, Slater Steel, another one—800 jobs.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Hershey.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** That's right.

We need to have these tax incentives so that we can encourage employers to create new jobs in our communities and to keep these jobs in our communities.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I wanted to speak to this motion today because I have a very brief comment to make. I think we have to have a tax policy, an economic policy, that will ensure that jobs are created. I agree with the member. I'm not sure that the solution proposed by the leader of the third party is going to do that.

That's the comment I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

1520

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'm eager to talk today in support of this motion that was presented by my leader, Andrea Horwath.

In London-Fanshawe and, I'm sure, as my colleague from Welland mentioned, many cities, people are struggling; people have lost their jobs. In my neighbourhood, where I live, I have seen homes foreclosed. That really disturbs me because, as I ran for this election, one of the big issues that people told me about is jobs and job security and job benefits.

What we're doing by presenting this corporate tax credit for businesses is allowing them to get the benefit of having lower taxes, but there are strings attached to show what they're going to do with that investment that we're making in their businesses.

What we want to propose with this motion is—we want to target job creators and have a job creation strategy that gives companies tax breaks only if they actually create the job, invest in machinery and equipment, or help employees upgrade their skills.

As you know, my riding has a 9.2% unemployment rate, which is one of the highest—much higher than what Ontario has now. We've lost a record number of manufacturing jobs, and the corporate tax giveaway that the government is proposing is not working.

Throwing money at the problem without the means of a measuring stick of how this money is going to create jobs doesn't make sense. The people of my riding need real leadership from this House, not a photo op from the Liberals. We need to have real jobs from these investments.

I can't stress enough how upset my constituents were that they couldn't find a permanent job with benefits. Working two and three jobs just to put their food on the table and to pay the HST on life's necessities—it's not fair. And then we're giving corporations tax giveaways without making them accountable for the money that they're going to be using from the taxpayers.

Speaker, I support corporate tax breaks for companies, but for the companies, again, that create new jobs, train workers and buy equipment to create a job for someone, not just giving away the money and watching it go out the door. Handing over the keys to the vault without requiring anything in return is an unacceptable way to address the real concerns that currently face jobless people in Ontario.

Lower rates haven't proven to boost productivity in our economy, so I don't understand why we think the solution is to continually lower corporate tax rates and not have them be accountable to create the job for the money that they're getting. As a mother, I wouldn't give my child dessert if they didn't eat all their food, so we have to use that same principle. You're going to use that money until it's all used up and you're creating a job, or you won't see a dollar of it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very privileged to engage in this opportunity this afternoon.

Our member from Thornhill made it perfectly clear that our position is somewhat a juxtaposition of the position of the member from Hamilton.

I would say the leader of the NDP is actually standing on a principle that has been made, and I respect the fact that you do stand and speak with conviction and courage on what you stand for. What I'm really trying to say directly—but saying it indirectly, it's much more positive.

The government does not seem to have that sort of compass, that commitment, that conviction to be straightforward with the people of Ontario. In fact, I feel—

**Interjection:** And consistent.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I feel consistently—this week and last week, we've heard from officers of the Legislature, independent experts in the environment. They've failed. They said they would have such reduction in energy use—we saw in the clippings this morning. They see reduction in improvements in recycling and waste diversion. They failed. In every single measurement—this is just one more word.



At least you're putting a stake in the ground. You think this could make a difference for people and families. Good for you.

But I haven't heard one thing—our leader, Tim Hudak, today said the same thing on both of his first lead questions: "What have you done?"

What have they done? It's really what the people of Ontario should be worried about. They're leaving—here it is—the 8th of December, and we're not going to be here until some time late February, if then. Prior to that, there are supposed to be hearings this winter. Normally the standing committees meet during the winter in pre-budget consultations. It's disappointing that those committees have not even been struck, so they won't be sitting, so the people of Ontario won't know what's going on because there really is no plan.

Now, this particular bill, I think, if you put a bit of referencing around it, is about jobs and the economy. Ultimately we all agree there are no jobs and no real job plan. We know the economy is on a negative slope.

Now, there are some relationships here which I need to put on the record. I think this is what I want to start now.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, order, please.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Here are some of the risks in the economy right now: Ontario, as has been mentioned by other speakers, is a very high tax jurisdiction. By any measure—you look at almost every other province, including Manitoba, which is the best example, where it's an NDP government. They have zero tax. But here's the most important thing: Corporations do not pay the tax unless they make profit.

Now how are the companies doing? Look at the market—not just Research in Motion, which used to be \$85 or \$100 a share. It's now about \$15 a share. That's loss of equity, whether it's in pension funds or your own personal investments. So this idea here of reducing tax is not the only solution. It's, to me, I think, quite frankly—

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, you've got to look at, I think, the best example. They have a study going on with Don Drummond, a world expert and one of Canada's most respected economists. Here's what he's saying in Ontario: When talking about the deficit in 2009, Mr. Drummond said, "It's a lot higher than people are thinking, and it's a graphic illustration to me that there is a structural deficit."

Ontario has a spending problem. They really do. They have increased spending faster than the growth in the economy. As such, they've created a complete depression within the province of Ontario. We are shedding jobs, not gaining jobs. Every point in the GDP—this is very important—represents about \$700 million or \$800 million in revenue. Every point that goes down, you lose the \$700 million, and your costs go up; it's a billion dollars for every point. So if your economy is not growing, your revenue is shrinking. They don't seem to understand that.

The NDP at least have principles.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Hamilton Centre, you have two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I want to thank all members who participated in the debate. There's a couple of things that were brought to the table that I really do think it's important to address.

First and foremost, I don't believe that the people of Ontario think that the banks are all that hard up. I think the people of Ontario think that the banks are doing quite well. They would rather see a break for themselves for a change instead of the big banks getting more and more of a break.

I think that it's important to acknowledge that Manitoba is doing great. They're a fantastic government; they've got their fourth mandate now. Their corporate tax rate, in fact, is 12%. Their small business rate is zero, but their corporate tax rate is 12% at this point because they actually stopped reducing their corporate taxes when the recession hit, and they switched to a targeted approach that targets tax credits for things like investment and job creation. So I too, like the Conservatives actually, would like to follow along with what Manitoba is doing because I think they have it right. When you don't have the money, you simply don't give it away.

I would disagree with the idea that this is only about a spending problem. I think it's obviously a revenue problem, and that's why we think it is so irresponsible for this government, at this point in time, to continue with the corporate tax reductions.

1530

You know what? During our campaign, we said, "Roll them back to 14%." But in the spirit of trying to find some compromise, trying to work together with the government, trying to bring some ideas forward that we thought they might be able to support, we went away from that 14% figure and said, "Okay, just stop right now. Just don't continue with the next 1.5% reduction."

What is so hard about that? Why is that so difficult, when we know that those tax cuts are not working? I'm going to reiterate for a final time: Jobs are not being created. In October, we lost 75,000 jobs in Ontario. We have no investment happening here. In lockstep, investment is going down at the same time as the tax rates, and we have not enough training. The minister should know that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will have the vote on this later.

## IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

Mr. Dickson moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 6, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation



firearms / Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu relativement à la vente de fausses armes à feu.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to address a growing concern heard from our communities and our law enforcement partners across Ontario. I'm speaking of the ease of access to purchase replica and imitation firearms in our province. Replica firearms are literally identical to handguns.

Every few weeks or so, I read a news story about our public schools being disrupted and put into lockdown because a student or an at-risk youth brings a replica firearm to school. Innocent civilians are being intimidated and robbed because street-level criminals have easy access to replica firearms. Our law enforcement partners often mistake these genuine-looking replicas for actual guns, and several of these replicas can be converted into real guns quite easily. These are dangers that replica and imitation firearms pose.

We know that there are some laws in place that cover off replicas and, in some cases, completely prohibit their sale based on the make and model of the specific firearm. For example, we had a Zoraki model 925, which was available for sale at a shop in Oshawa up until this summer. The model 925, if you've seen it, looks like a type of automatic, Uzi-style pistol that you might have seen in the Al Pacino film *Scarface*.

You won't see too many track and field races being started with a starter pistol like that. Recognizing little, if any, legitimate use for the Zoraki 925, the RCMP rightfully deemed this model, along with the Zoraki 914, a prohibited firearm. The RCMP website also states that the Zoraki models are being sold as blank-firing pistols, but can also fire tear gas and flares with a muzzle adapter.

Since prohibiting these two firearms in late June this year, our Durham Police investigators have confirmed that these two Zoraki models are no longer on sale in Durham region. So, bit by bit, there's some good news. And more good news: Some municipalities have taken the initiative to follow through with an outright banning of replica handguns in their jurisdictions. One of those municipalities is the township of Scugog, in Durham region, which banned the sale of replica guns in its jurisdiction about six years ago.

Moving forward with more stringent controls on these replicas, we could look at imposing province-wide or even Canada-wide bans, and I would entertain some kind of all-party initiative on that front with your approval.

The legal age to purchase a replica firearm is 18 years, but often these guns get into the hands of youth. Youth are not to blame in all cases of replica gun incidents. However, I feel that our youth need some more support, and that includes keeping replica firearms out of their hands and the hands of their peers.

There are still many real-looking replica firearms legally for sale in Ontario. They are federally permitted for sale in Ontario and across the country. If the RCMP cannot ban each and every one of them outright, then we need stronger regulations in the meantime.

That's where my private member's bill comes in. My bill proposes amendments to the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000, put in place by the previous government. To this date, the IFRA, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, has not yet been amended.

My proposed amendments to the bill are as follows: The purchaser should provide, upon purchase, a written statement that describes his or her intentions regarding the use of the imitation firearm and include a declaration that he or she will not use the imitation firearm for an unlawful purpose.

The second one is a requirement that the prospective buyer provide the seller with a criminal reference check, proving that the individual has not been convicted of any criminal offence for which a pardon has not yet been granted.

The third and final recommendation proposes increased fines for those who contravene the above proposed amendments. The fines for sellers contravening this act would go up to \$25,000 for a first offence and \$50,000 for a second offence, a significant increase over the current \$15,000 fine.

Just a few short months before the previous Conservative government passed this legislation, our former member and past Attorney General Michael Bryant came forward with a private member's bill with the same goal: to regulate the sale of imitation firearms in the province of Ontario. It was called the Replica Firearms Regulation and Protection Act, 2000. That bill put forward by Mr. Bryant was stronger and it more closely regulated the sale of imitation firearms than existing law that we have on the books. I have taken the important parts of his bill and new information and am proposing to fit them into the existing legislation from the previous government.

Since I brought this debate to the Legislature back in June of this year, I continued to work with the Chief of Durham Regional Police Service, Mike Ewles, who supports the proposed amendments to this legislation. Durham police have confirmed even more seizures of replica firearms. They continue to take the time of our police officers and investigators and they continue to serve as tools of intimidation towards innocent civilians and between criminals themselves.

During an investigation of an Oshawa resident this October past, just a month ago, our Durham Regional Police officers seized a 9-millimetre replica handgun, over 490 grams of hashish and 4.8 grams of heroin with a combined street value of over \$12,000. The replica gun was used by these criminals as an intimidation device in the same manner as a handgun. Because it is not recognized as a real gun, its possession carries fewer legal consequences than those of a real gun. I just wanted to use this particular story as an example where genuine criminals are making use of replica firearms.



There were two more cases in Durham region this November, just a couple of weeks ago. Durham police received a tip that an 18-year-old kid was carrying a handgun near a local Pickering high school on November 3. Officers attended the area and spoke with the witnesses, who offered a description of the fleeing suspect. Officers canvassed the area and located the lone male suspect at a local shopping mall. The male was taken into custody at gunpoint and found to be in possession of a loaded replica handgun.

Although Durham region has been lucky enough not to lose a life due to an incident mistaking a replica for a genuine handgun, because the danger is real, it would be a tragedy for an 18-year-old to have lost his or her life just for playing around with fake guns in public. None of us ever want to lose the life of a child because he or she got the bright idea to brandish a replica gun in a view that could be seen by a police officer and was shot. I would never want to lose a police officer when the officer made a judgment call that it was a replica gun, only to have it be a real gun, and the officer was shot and perhaps killed.

On the night of November 14, 2011, just a few weeks ago, Durham officers located a stolen vehicle in the vicinity of Falby Court in Ajax. As the officers approached the stolen vehicle occupied with several male suspects, five youth fled on foot. A replica handgun was found and the three youth, all Toronto residents under the age of 18, were arrested. This is an example of another dangerous situation that could easily have ended in tragedy. There are several stories like this.

1540

As an example, a young man was charged around Weston and Finch in Toronto on November 27, a couple of days ago. He brought a replica handgun to a party Saturday night, early Sunday morning. Police were called to investigate a dispute at this party and the young man brandished what looked like a semi-automatic. Of course, with this information the officers would go in prepared to use lethal force if necessary.

Perhaps the most disturbing news came just a few days ago, when I picked up my local Ajax and Pickering News Advertiser of December 1 to learn that an 81-year-old Pickering senior was carjacked at gunpoint in Durham. The male senior was forced to surrender his vehicle to a young man and woman, but they kept him hostage at gunpoint. The couple drove the man to a bank and took his money. They drove him to a shopping mall and forced him to buy two BlackBerry phones. When police finally caught up with the suspects a week later, they executed a search warrant, recovering the senior's stolen car and the replica handgun used to intimidate him. And the stories go on. I could read more and more of these stories, but police bulletins from other ridings are bringing these more to the forefront as well.

Moving forward, I want to quickly address another unique danger that these replicas pose to the public and to criminals who use them for illegal purposes. Police say that converting replica guns and starter pistols into real weapons could become a major problem in this country.

Broadly speaking, firearms are much more controlled in Canada than they are south of the border. So, naturally, enterprising criminals and anyone else who wants a real gun will find creative ways to go about their illegal activities.

I want to speak about a case from British Columbia. According to CTV news, a 67-year-old man was arrested in May on charges linked to a case of gun conversion. The RCMP said that conversion is so easy that even a layperson can do it.

Back to Durham region and here locally in Ontario, where earlier this year Durham police seized a replica that was converted to a firearm by drilling out the barrel—a simple, simple procedure. At the time of my last debate, we were still waiting for the test results from this firearm from the feds. It was sent to the RCMP for test firing and the gun blew up in the process. This is a weapon that could have done a great deal of harm to the shooter, the intended target and a number of innocent bystanders.

Our police officers across Ontario do a great job. Arrests are being made and prohibited replica guns are being kept out of hunting and sporting shops as of right now.

I am going to speed it up a touch, Mr Speaker, because I know time is of the essence.

I just want to tell you that this is a simple bill with a simple purpose, and that's to reduce the amount of replica firearms in circulation and to hold sellers and purchasers more accountable. None of us ever want to lose the life of a child or an officer of the law due to an avoidable tragedy. Please support Bill 6 today. We will work with you. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want to commend the member from Ajax-Pickering. I know in his community he's highly respected. The intent here is very genuine and, in that respect, is generally a good thing—I use the word “generally” quite generally.

What I'm actually trying to say here is that I have a bit of an attraction to this issue. I'm going to read, mostly to stay on topic here in the limited time I have.

First, it's important to put some reference around this thing. I looked into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police website and looked up replica firearms. It's quite a good article—a fact sheet. Here's some information:

“Replica firearms are prohibited

“To be prohibited as a replica firearm, a device must closely resemble an existing make and model of firearm. If it looks like an antique firearm, as defined by the Criminal Code and Criminal Code regulations, it is not prohibited.

“The Canadian Firearms Program receives many enquiries from people wondering whether an imitation firearm would be considered a replica if it resembles a real firearm in many ways, but it is made of clear or brightly coloured plastic, or is much smaller in size.

“Many of these devices need to be assessed case by case. As a general rule, however, those made out of clear



plastic and those that are a lot smaller than the real firearm are not prohibited replicas. Those that are brightly coloured might be prohibited, depending on other features.”

This is quite important:

“As an individual, you may keep any replicas that you owned on December 1, 1998. You do not need a licence to possess a replica firearm and it does not have to be registered.” That’s 1998. It’s sort of grandfathering all the old ones that are very valuable today. “However, you cannot acquire, make or import a replica firearm. If you take a replica firearm out of Canada, you cannot bring it back in.

“If you are a business, you may possess, acquire or import replica firearms only if you have a valid firearms business licence” that allows you to possess these prohibited devices.

It goes on. It’s quite well structured about who can get them and what you can do with them, and it’s very well structured in law today. That’s how it exists.

The background of this is much like the member from Ajax–Pickering said. They are used, if they are—it’s like trying to regulate criminals. Generally, they’re in jail or they’re breaking the law somehow when they are out. They don’t follow the rules like we do. That’s why the registry in Ottawa is so controversial. I won’t get into that part of it, but this sounds a bit like it.

But these replicas don’t have serial numbers or other identifying devices, and it really requires people to keep records. So if you’ve got this little corner store thing with the permit and the licence to sell them, they’re going to have these little pieces of paper hanging around with some stuff on it like, “John bought this thing that looks like a .22,” but there’s no serial number. It’s a good intention and it just doesn’t—we haven’t got the framework right here.

However, I want to give credit to Durham Regional Police Constable Todd Petzold, who brought this to my attention in 2006. I called a meeting at that time with the deputy chief of police and two or three mayors, and we had some pretty interesting discussions, and I want to give them credit.

In 2006, regional council endorsed a resolution brought forward by Mayor Marilyn Pearce, which came basically as a result of that meeting—a great former mayor—and a resolution was adopted to pass a bylaw to regulate the sale and possession of replica firearms in 2006. A copy of the minutes from the regional council meeting is attached—and if anybody wants to, you can see it. There’s an existing municipal bylaw.

This is a quote from Marilyn Pearce, the mayor at the time: “I am hoping all of the municipalities in the GTA will come on board on this initiative to get toy guns off the streets. It is really about protecting children and I don’t know how anyone can have an issue with that”: Marilyn Pearce, 2006.

Currently, there’s township bylaw 02-06. In the municipality of Clarington, there’s a bylaw there; the township of Uxbridge.

Again, the people you’re talking to here are basically criminals. They break the law; they don’t follow the law. And you’re really making it—a lot of paperwork here, as far as I see it.

It’s the right thing to do, Joe. I’d like to support it, but we need to do some work on it. I thank you very much for bringing it up, though. I think that’s important. I don’t approve of them. I have met with people. How do you regulate it, though? Do you understand? It’s a black device that looks like something, and “I was bought by so-and-so from”—it sounds a little informal for me, but I appreciate the effort you’ve put into it. I’m waiting for my colleague Ms. Elliott, who is a practising lawyer, and I believe that she has more to say, more accurately than I could ever say it. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** It gives me great pleasure to rise on this issue and to share my thoughts. I also would like to commend the member from Ajax–Pickering for his concern and his work on the laudable goal of protecting our community. I think I share with the member opposite in complimenting you, sir, through the Speaker, on your efforts to make Ontario a better place.

1550

I think it’s important to stress that no one would ever disagree with the idea of making Ontario more safe and providing the tools to assist in making Ontario a safer place. I think no one would disagree with that. That’s why the spirit of what the member from Ajax–Pickering would like to do is exactly that. The spirit of his intention is to make Ontario better, to provide some tools.

However, it’s the job of myself as a critic to highlight the efficiency and effectiveness of a bill proposed. This is not to say that I question the spirit of the bill proposed, but whether or not it’s an efficient or effective way to address the concern.

If I can frame the concern this way, essentially the member opposite provided some very serious stories about concerns in the community, examples where imitation firearms were used. It’s important that we look at these stories, these narratives. They provide a context of why the bill is proposed, but we should not be moved by the emotions evoked. It should be a rational and critical approach when we look at a bill, not an emotional reaction to some tragic stories. When we assess the effectiveness or the usefulness of a bill, it should be done with logic, clear thought and rational thinking.

The purpose of this bill, if I understand my friend correctly, is essentially to limit replica firearms in the public, to limit their sale. Does this bill achieve that? Well, let’s break it down.

The first point is, there are two new requirements added. The first requirement is that if someone is to purchase a replica firearm, they have to provide a statement indicating their intention. Now, anyone purchasing a firearm, when asked, “What is your intention?” will not say, “My intention is to commit a crime.” Obviously we can approach that with the logical inference that someone



wouldn't at that point say, "I'm purchasing this firearm so I can hold up a convenience store." They wouldn't say that.

The written statement portion—while the intention, again, I support—is well thought in terms of intention, but in a practical sense no one would admit to committing a criminal offence or an improper use at that point. If it's a starter pistol, he or she would indicate, "I'm purchasing this imitation firearm, this starter pistol for the purposes of recreational sports, competitions." If it's another type of replica firearm—for recreational uses or for collector purposes.

The second issue is providing a criminal record check. The issues that are engaged at that point are twofold. One is, we're providing store owners, people who are selling firearms, with a privacy interest. They are now able to access a piece of private information from a consumer at a level where there is not any evidence of any crime yet committed, and it concerns me with respect to the liberties of an individual and their privacy interests.

Furthermore, if there is an individual who has a criminal record—for example, for drinking and driving or impaired operation of a motor vehicle—but is a coach of an athletic team, are we precluding coaches who have an unrelated criminal record from purchasing a starter pistol? This is again speaking to the effectiveness or the practical nature of the bill.

Again, the bill proposed is directly targeting those who are selling replica firearms. It's a bill that is not Criminal Code. As my colleague indicated, from the party opposite, there are Criminal Code stipulations, there are Criminal Code sanctions on the possession of prohibited firearms. Criminal Code sanctions are by far more powerful, more persuasive, a better means of limiting or discouraging activity which is criminal. So in that respect, there are firearms that are prohibited under the Criminal Code, and there are replica firearms which fall under that category. I would respectfully submit that that is by far a more powerful means of sanctioning or discouraging criminal activity.

Then we're left with two additional concerns. When we look at the record-keeping component and the sanctions on the business owner, if a business owner improperly sells an imitation firearm, it makes sense that they should face a sanction. Increasing that sanction is arguably—there is some rationale, some logic to that.

However, the record-keeping portion—some of the concerns were highlighted by my colleague from the party opposite. How can we connect the record-keeping to the reduction of firearms in the public? How do we make that connection? If there is a statement that's kept by the store owner, and if there is a criminal record check that's kept by the store owner, they're presumably going to keep it in a file. The replica firearm is purchased by that person and is used at some point down the road. Without any specific type of identification on that firearm, it's very difficult to connect that firearm to the person who purchased it, to the location where it was purchased, to the store it was purchased in. There isn't a

causal link between them. If a firearm is used in a crime, how is that then to be connected to the store where it was purchased? How is it then to be connected to the person who purchased it? There isn't an identifying feature.

That component of record-keeping, while well-intentioned, doesn't have a causal link, and it doesn't have a connection to the effectiveness. How can we assess whether that would be effective in deterring people from selling or possessing imitation firearms? In summary, the concern is not addressed by the bill.

Again, I'd like to stress that I don't have any disparaging comments toward the member or his intentions. I'm simply criticizing or evaluating the effectiveness of the bill. If the purpose of the bill is to reduce imitation firearms in the public or in the hands of youth, then this bill does not address that, in the way it's presented. It provides an inefficient framework that's—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Are you for it or against it?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** It's inefficient, so I'm against it.

It's inefficient. The framework of it doesn't address the real concerns, which I am completely behind and I support. We certainly need to make Ontario safer. We certainly need to help our youth and prevent these types of crimes, but this bill will not achieve that. There is not the logical connection. There isn't the rational connection between the purpose and the logistics of the record-keeping and the requirements of providing a written statement and a criminal check. If we balance privacy interests and effectiveness, I would respectfully say that the balance does not weigh in favour of the bill.

It's essentially a bill that requires deterrence by red tape, providing more red tape in the hope of discouraging the replication of firearms. But if it doesn't do that—if it doesn't accomplish that goal—what's the point?

When we look at bills that are presented, we have an obligation to make sure the bills that are presented have a clear purpose and a clear effect. Otherwise, we will clutter our legal system; we will clutter the bills that exist.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The legal system already has enough hurdles and obstacles as it is.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Lawyers clutter the legal system.

**Interjection:** Only the bad ones.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Raise your hand if you're a lawyer in the room.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The final component is the requirement that store owners keep their records for five years. We're placing a lot of onus on store owners to keep these records. What are they going to do with the records, and what's the purpose of this?

If we combine all these factors, I respectfully submit that it's just not an effective bill to address the concern. For that reason, I think we need to rework it, retool it, to make it a more effective tool that our law enforcement agencies, our different administrators, can use to address their real concerns.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in support of Bill 6, introduced by my colleague and seatmate, the member from Ajax–Pickering.

1600

I think we have at least heard from the other two parties in this House that they do recognize that this is an issue of concern across the province. There certainly is the potential for loss of life, either on the part of a person in possession of an imitation firearm or possibly one of our law enforcement officers. I think my colleague has very clearly demonstrated that we have a serious problem.

Now, it's interesting, certainly, to hear from the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton that, while he recognizes the problem, he has certain issues with it. I would simply say to him, this is why it's so imperative for us to form the standing committees of this Legislature in a very timely fashion so that we can take this type of bill that addresses an important issue for further discussion. So I would urge the other two parties to consider that requirement that we form our standing committees very, very soon.

Now, looking at the provisions of the bill, I would say that the requirement that a criminal reference check be provided is an extremely important provision. The member for Durham has alluded to criminals using these replicas. So clearly he sees a potential that we might catch a few of these criminals through a criminal reference check. This is not an onerous requirement. It is very often required of coaches now, those who are involved with our youth, and it's a very simple provision, and I think an excellent one.

This legislation is important because it seeks to prevent harm to the community, and I think this is where someone like my colleague the member for Ajax–Pickering has such extensive experience—

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Good member, good member.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Excellent member.

We have heard some very interesting inaugural speeches where we've heard the background of many of our new members in this place, and I think I would like to just bring to everyone's attention that this particular member was first elected to public office some 40 years ago. He has served as a school trustee, a regional councillor, a councillor and now clearly represents the people of Ajax–Pickering so well with his deep roots into the community.

I did want to touch on the issue of the RCMP, who have maintained that certain starter pistols and replicas can be converted into makeshift ammunition-discharging firearms. I think this is especially important. The member has alluded to the fact that this can be done quite simply, and I certainly found that reference through the RCMP's comments on the matter.

I found it particularly alarming—there was a recent article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, actually, just on December

2 of this year, and they have described another replica called “the outlaw.” This is a replica of a sawed-off shotgun which can slide into a backpack. The real version is a prohibited weapon, but this replica, of course, can be obtained and, as the RCMP has said, could be converted to an ammunition-discharging device.

The member has alluded to the interests of the Durham Regional Police. I know that in York region, our deputy police chief has also made the suggestion that starter pistols and other replica handguns aren't needed at all.

We've had a couple of incidents in York region. In February of this year, a Vaughan man was charged with possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose after police were called to Richmond Hill. Even more recently, just this summer, there was an occurrence at the Tim Hortons in Newmarket; officers seized two replica handguns, a box cutter knife, two plastic badges and a police notebook and pens similar to what are used by police officers in York region. So this man was apprehended before any serious harm was done, something that certainly—I think the provisions of this bill could have prevented having that incident occur.

Now, the federal government does seem to consider the issue of replica firearms to be of some importance. I think the member from Durham also found this reference: that you cannot take a replica firearm out of Canada, you cannot bring it back in—if you do take it outside, you cannot bring it back in—and if you're a business, you may possess, acquire or import replica firearms only if you have a valid firearms business licence that allows you to possess prohibited devices for an approved purpose.

The Criminal Code also does ensure that there's a mandatory minimum penalty of one year in prison if an imitation firearm is used to commit, to attempt to commit, or during the flight after committing a serious criminal offence. So clearly, the federal government, even while they are dismantling the gun registry, does seem to acknowledge that there is some potential harm from the use of imitation firearms. I think the point that my colleague wants to make is that we should try and prevent these circumstances in the first place.

Now, there was a reference to the use of bylaws, and certainly some municipalities have passed bylaws to restrict the sale of these particular imitation firearms. I know the town of Aurora looked at this in York region, but in fact they decided not to proceed. Clearly, when you have a situation with bylaws, you're going to have a patchwork of regulations. This makes it very confusing for the average person. I think this is why a provincial solution to this issue is so important, and I would urge all members to support this bill here at second reading so that we can discuss it further in committee. Thank you so much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to commend the member for Ajax–Pickering for bringing this bill forward this



afternoon. I think it's a worthwhile discussion, and I know it's a bill that he has demonstrated interest in in the past, in terms of a previous Parliament. I think that we, as legislators, though, have a responsibility to ask a number of questions with respect to the bill, and I hope that he will address some of these issues when he responds.

For my part, I think we have to ask what exactly is the nature and scope of the problem. I believe he has outlined an answer to that question in the course of his initial presentation, but I think we should look at that again. We have to question whether or not this bill will be effective—certainly there are some expressions of concern from this side of the House in that regard; we need to know what is the cost to Ontarians, whether it's directly to the taxpayers or to the individuals who will be affected; and whether or not this bill can be enforced.

I look forward to hearing more about this issue as the debate unfolds, and I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I was just shocked by the NDP comments on this bill, talking about controlling replica guns is going to create red tape for the seller of the gun, that it's going to be a burden on the legal system. This is what the Tories were saying about attempts to get rid of gun control or gun registries. I'm shocked at the NDP. Maybe the new breed of NDP here is much different than the old breed I used to know. At least the Tories are consistent about this.

I just want to say that I commend the member for bringing this forward, because what it basically is—I think it's a concern that we all have. If you ask your local police forces, there are incidents of this happening in all of our ridings, where there are these replica weapons. And the thing that caught my attention was the easy conversion of these things that are being smuggled in from China. They're smuggling in AK-47s that are BB guns. Can you imagine that? And with the removal of a couple of interchangeable parts, they can make the AK-47s into lethal weapons. These are smuggled in from China.

So we're not talking about your toy guns; we're talking about a business here in smuggling, basically, in the criminal underworld, that is being supplied by this lack of oversight. The thing about it—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I hear the NDP talking about, "Well, there's Criminal Code sanctions. Let the Criminal Code take over for this." The Criminal Code, as you know, has such a high threshold—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Stand with the people. Stand with the people on Dufferin Street.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The member from James Bay doesn't care about the people on Dufferin Street who are being held up at gunpoint and that people are being shot at by these guns.

**Interjection:** He cares.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** He doesn't care. Because there are threats to people's safety in all of our cities, and in this

case here—you know, for instance, there's a Criminal Code sanction against carrying illegal weapons, handguns, in your cars. Well, these illegal weapons in your cars are carried all over the city, and there's never been a conviction—a rare day in May when a criminal is convicted for carrying weapons in his or her car. The Criminal Code never convicts anybody because all the Bay Street lawyers go to defend the criminals who are riding around our streets with illegal handguns underneath the seats. So if we leave it up to the Criminal Code, it'll be a rare day in June when they're convicted of carrying a real gun in their car, never mind these replica guns that can be used to threaten police officers.

1610

I don't know if many of you ever go on night patrol with your local police officers. I know the good men and women in 13 Division. I go out at night and I get a sense of what's going on. I go with the men and women of 32 Division and we see what's going on. And I'll tell you, they approach people constantly. They go to a car, they go to people standing around and they say, "Hi, how are you doing?" Well, you can imagine, in some cases, if one of these police officers is approached by someone else with one of these replica guns. How does the police officer know whether it's the real thing or not? The police officer, God forbid, has to respond. This is a threat that exists with these innocuous—things that some people call innocuous; they're not innocuous. They're a real danger to the police officers.

Also, young people say, "Well, I can go around with these replica weapons because if I get caught, nothing will happen to me." But they can go—and as we've seen, I know in Toronto there have been a number of them where people have been mugged. They've been held up by replica semi-automatic pistols, because they think, "Well, there's no consequence because the Criminal Code doesn't take this seriously." So if you wait for the Criminal Code to do something about these things, it's a rare day in June when they take this seriously.

So we need to look at it provincially to see if we can strengthen an already existing act. In their wisdom, the Conservative government of 2000 brought in this legislation. It wasn't a Liberal act; it wasn't an NDP act; it was a Conservative government that said, "You need legislation provincially to make sure that this type of illegal replica gun industry doesn't promulgate all over the province."

So the member from Ajax is saying, "Let's look at this and see if we can strengthen legislation that already exists there to make sure that our police officers aren't threatened; to make sure that the children in our streets are not threatened by these weapons, which can be extremely, extremely dangerous, because they are used like weapons." So let's give it a chance. Look it over.

No private member's bill is ever perfect. I know the member from Timmins—James Bay thinks they're all perfect when they come here. Well, they're not. They've got to go to committee, but he's stopping the committees



from being formed. Shame on the member from Timmins—James Bay.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a few comments with respect to Bill 6, which the member from Ajax—Pickering has reintroduced this session: An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act. And I would like to start by commending the member for the intent behind the bill, which, simply stated, is to keep our communities safe. I know that he's a very dedicated member and keeps his ear to the ground in our communities and knows that many people in our communities are misusing these imitation firearms, either by using them in their original state in the commission of crimes or by modifying them to allow them to become actual working firearms.

This is something that our chief of police in Durham region, Chief Mike Ewles, has been very concerned about, and I would just like to read from a news article from March of this year, where he stated: "To someone staring down the barrel of a gun, you'd never assume it was anything other than a real firearm," said Durham police chief Mike Ewles. 'For all intents and purposes, an officer on the site would have no idea these weren't real.'"

So it is a problem, there's no question, and I do commend the member for bringing it up. But there are problems with this bill, and I would refer to a position paper on replica firearms that was prepared by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police youth committee, which clearly indicated that amending provincial legislation is not the desired route to be taken. The paper clearly states that "the improper use of imitation firearms in connection with other criminal offences is currently addressed within the Criminal Code," and indicates that any such improvements that could be made to legislation pertaining to imitation firearms should be addressed through the existing federal legislation. So we start with that.

Next, I'd just like to take a moment, because I know that my colleague the member from Barrie also has some comments that he wants to make, but there are some problems with some of the specifics of this bill, some of which were outlined by the member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton, who did a very good job, I think, of outlining the concerns which we share with respect to this. First of all, what this bill requires is that if you go to a vendor indicating that you want to buy one of these imitation firearms, you have to sign a declaration indicating the purpose for which you intend to use it. Well, clearly, Mr. Speaker, if you're planning to use it to rob the local convenience store, you're not going to indicate that on a declaration. So you wonder whether it's worth anything to have that declaration filed.

Secondly, we're taking a look at asking the vendors to hold onto the records for a period of five years, to do a criminal background record check. Okay, that's all fine. The problem is with respect to the firearms themselves.

There are no serial numbers on them, so there's no way of tracing where a firearm might have been used in the commission of a crime to a particular vendor. So what's it all for? That's what we have a concern about. We want to make sure that any changes that are going to be made are going to be effective, are going to be used to connect with the firearm that's being used in the commission of a crime, and that's what I think we really need to focus on.

At the end of the day, I have to say that I think it's a bill that is worthy of discussion. It is raising an important issue that we do need to deal with. I'm just concerned that the measures contained in the bill aren't going to be the effective ones to actually deal with it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Let me first state that I highly appreciate the member from Ajax—Pickering's intent to make our province safer for our families. I certainly share these goals, and they're a priority for me as well. Thus, it's important that the proposed amendment will actually achieve these goals. I'll discuss a couple of issues that should be considered when we vote on this bill, I believe.

The bill was proposed last May, and at that time it became apparent that there was a need to consult with more policing stakeholders to ensure this amendment would actually, in reality, have its intended effect on community safety. Even the sole policing stakeholder who was consulted, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, said that it was inappropriate for serious incidents with imitation guns to be addressed by anything other than the Criminal Code of Canada.

Also, the proposed amendment will essentially create an imitation gun registry. I certainly hope that, at the very least, we can learn lessons gleaned from the multi-billion-dollar federal real gun registry boondoggle. The success of the imitation gun registry would further be strained because the pretend guns don't have real serial numbers. It's also going to create bureaucracy around our businesses, create red tape that's going to be impossible to track. It's not real.

We've seen that not enough policing stakeholders were consulted to adequately inform this bill, and those who were questioned its efficacy at really achieving safer communities. For hard-working families and businesses, the potential cost of this amendment plus the added layers of red tape for a group already bombarded with bureaucracy would be an irresponsible designation of resources.

We don't need more government in business and we don't need more government telling some businesses what to do. We need to be able to address the roots of the problem, not the symptoms. That's all this bill does: Create more red tape around an issue that really needs a serious look and a real consultation with all the real stakeholders who have a real stake in the safety in our communities.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?



The member for Ajax-Pickering, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Thank you to the members from Oak Ridges-Markham, Eglinton-Lawrence, Durham, Bramalea-Gore-Malton, Wellington-Halton Hills and, of course, Whitby-Oshawa. I sincerely appreciate your information, and I did indicate quite clearly that I am looking to pursue that further, jointly with members of all parties.

I must tell you that this is not a plastic water gun; this is an identical handgun. The costs are borne on the bearer of the replica handgun, who has to take a declaration when he acquires the handgun, and that cost is not borne by the taxpayer.

When the chief of police says to me, "I'm petrified," I get petrified. Police know that it's a serious problem; it's a growing problem. As I indicated—and I don't want to be emotional about this but I want to think of a young person and I want to think of a police officer. None of us ever want to lose the life of a youth because he or she brandished a replica gun that happened to be viewed by a police officer and was consequently shot. I would never want to lose a police officer when the officer made a judgment call—and this is a concern expressed to me from police—that it was a replica gun only to have a real gun and the officer was shot and perhaps killed.

1620

I'm willing to work with everyone on this. I would like very much for this to go forward to committee where I can discuss it further with all members of the House today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time provided for private members public business has expired.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM SPENDING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Ms. MacCharles.

Ms. MacCharles has moved private members' notice of motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### TAXATION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Horwath has moved private members' notice of motion number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will deal with this vote after we finish other business.

#### IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Dickson has moved second reading of Bill 6, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulations Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Bill 6 is referred to committee of the whole.

The member for Ajax-Pickering.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Justice policy, please, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The bill has been referred to the justice committee. Is the majority in favour? Okay. The bill is referred to the justice committee.

#### TAXATION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Call the members into the House. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1624 to 1629.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Please take your seats.

Ms. Horwath has moved private members' notice of motion number 4. All in favour, please rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Horwath, Andrea	Schein, Jonah
Bisson, Gilles	Mantha, Michael	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Natyshak, Taras	Vanthof, John
Gélinas, France	Prue, Michael	

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All opposed, please rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Duguid, Brad	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Duncan, Dwight	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Elliott, Christine	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	O'Toole, John
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gravelle, Michael	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Piruzza, Teresa
Broten, Laurel C.	Jackson, Rod	Qadri, Shafiq
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Leone, Rob	Takhar, Harinder S.
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Walker, Bill
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Wilson, Jim
Damerla, Dipika	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 17; the nays are 51.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

Just before we adjourn, I just want to wish all of you a happy holiday season. We'll see you back in the new year.

This House stands adjourned until February 21, 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1632.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland—Quinte West	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham—Kent—Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward—Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	





*Continued from back cover*

## **Government regulations**

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	475
Hon. Margaret R. Best .....	475

## **Doctor shortage**

Ms. Sarah Campbell .....	475
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	476

## **Legislative pages**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	476
-------------------------------------	-----

## **Season's greetings**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	476
-------------------------------------	-----

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

### **Westport Lions Club / Athens Lions Club**

Mr. Steve Clark .....	476
-----------------------	-----

### **Bellevue House**

Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	477
--------------------------	-----

### **Dave Evans**

Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	477
---------------------------	-----

### **Child care**

Mr. Rob Leone .....	477
---------------------	-----

### **Access to public lands**

Ms. Sarah Campbell .....	477
--------------------------	-----

### **Ajax Strikers**

Mr. Joe Dickson .....	478
-----------------------	-----

### **First Special Service Force**

Mr. Norm Miller .....	478
-----------------------	-----

### **Road safety**

Mr. David Zimmer .....	478
------------------------	-----

### **Highway billboards**

Mr. Victor Fedeli .....	478
-------------------------	-----

### **Visitors**

Mr. Michael Mantha .....	479
--------------------------	-----

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

### **Family Caregiver Leave Act (Employment Standards Amendment), 2011, Bill 30, Mrs. Jeffrey / Loi de 2011 sur le congé familial pour les aidants naturels (modification des normes d'emploi), projet de loi 30, Mme Jeffrey**

First reading agreed to .....	479
-------------------------------	-----

### **Red Tape and Regulatory Review Act, 2011, Bill 31, Mr. Hillier / Loi de 2011 sur la révision des formalités administratives et des dispositions réglementaires, projet de loi 31, M. Hillier**

First reading agreed to .....	479
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	479

## **STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

### **Family caregiver leave**

Hon. Linda Jeffrey .....	480
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	480
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	481

## **PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

### **Skilled trades**

Mr. John O'Toole .....	481
------------------------	-----

### **Affordable housing**

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	482
------------------------	-----

### **Eastern Ontario development**

Mr. Phil McNeely .....	482
------------------------	-----

### **Health care funding**

Mr. Jim Wilson .....	482
----------------------	-----

### **Dog ownership**

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	483
------------------------	-----

### **Diagnostic services**

Mme France Gélinas .....	483
--------------------------	-----

### **Wind turbines**

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	483
----------------------------	-----

### **Taxation**

Mme France Gélinas .....	483
--------------------------	-----

### **Skilled trades**

Mr. Jim McDonell .....	483
------------------------	-----

### **Dog ownership**

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	484
------------------------	-----

### **Pension plans**

Mr. Jim Wilson .....	484
----------------------	-----

### **Wind turbines**

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	484
----------------------	-----

### **Tuition**

Mr. Rob Leone .....	484
---------------------	-----

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

### **Infrastructure program spending**

Ms. Tracy MacCharles .....	485
Mr. John O'Toole .....	487
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	488
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	489
Mrs. Christine Elliott .....	489
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	490
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield .....	491
Ms. Tracy MacCharles .....	492

**Taxation**

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	492
Mr. Yasir Naqvi.....	494
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	495
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	496
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	497
Mr. Monte McNaughton.....	498
Ms. Cindy Forster .....	498
Mr. Rob Leone.....	499
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	499
Mr. John O'Toole .....	499
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	500

**Imitation Firearms Regulation Amendment Act,  
2011, Bill 6, Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2011 modifiant la  
Loi sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu,  
projet de loi 6, M. Dickson**

Mr. Joe Dickson.....	501
Mr. John O'Toole .....	502
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	503
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	505
Mr. Ted Arnott.....	505
Mr. Mike Colle .....	506
Mrs. Christine Elliott .....	507
Mr. Rod Jackson .....	507
Mr. Joe Dickson.....	508

**Infrastructure program spending**

Motion agreed to.....	508
-----------------------	-----

**Taxation**

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon) .....	508
---	-----

**Imitation Firearms Regulation Amendment Act,  
2011, Bill 6, Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2011 modifiant la  
Loi sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu,  
projet de loi 6, M. Dickson**

Second reading agreed to.....	508
-------------------------------	-----

**Taxation**

Motion negatived.....	509
-----------------------	-----



## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 8 December 2011 / Jeudi 8 décembre 2011

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan</b>	
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	455
Mr. Rob Leone .....	455
Mr. John Vanthof.....	455
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	456
Mr. Rob E. Milligan.....	456
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	456
Mr. John O'Toole.....	458
Mr. Paul Miller.....	458
Mr. Mario Sergio.....	459
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	459
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	460
Mr. John O'Toole.....	461
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	461
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	462
Mr. Rod Jackson .....	462
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	462
Mr. Rob Leone .....	463
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	464
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	464
Mr. Rod Jackson .....	465
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	465
Mr. Rob Leone .....	465
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	466

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Monte McNaughton .....	466
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	466
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	466
Miss Monique Taylor.....	466
Mrs. Teresa Piruzza.....	466
Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	466
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	466
Mr. Michael Mantha .....	466
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	466

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Government spending</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak.....	466
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	466
<b>Government spending</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak.....	467
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	467
<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	468
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	468
<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	469
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	469
<b>Agency spending</b>	
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	470
Hon. Michael Chan .....	470
<b>Smart meters</b>	
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	470
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	470
<b>Renewable energy</b>	
Mrs. Teresa Piruzza.....	471
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	471
<b>Hospitals</b>	
Mrs. Jane McKenna.....	471
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	472
<b>Public transit</b>	
Mr. Jonah Schein.....	472
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	472
<b>Economic development</b>	
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	473
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	473
<b>Highway construction</b>	
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....	473
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	473
<b>Winter highway maintenance</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	474
Hon. Bob Chiarelli .....	474
<b>Renewable energy</b>	
Mr. Grant Crack .....	474
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	474
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	475

*Continued on inside back cover*











